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WAGER OF BATTLE;

A

TALE OF SAXON SLAVERY

IN

SHERWOOD FOREST.

BY HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT,

AUTHOR OF "HENRY VIII AND HIS SIX WIVES," "THE CAPTAINS OF THE GREEK AND ROMAN REPUBLICS," "THE ROMAN TRAITOR," "MARMADUKE WYVIL," "OLIVER CROMWELL," ETC. ETC. ETC.

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TO

ISRAEL DE WOLF ANDREWS, ESQ.,

OF EASTPORT, MAINE,

THIS HISTORICAL ROMANCE,

"Wager of Battle,"

Descriptive of the manners, customs and institutions of our mutual ancestry, Saxon and Norman, at the period of their fusion into the great race, speaking the English tongue, by whatever name, in distant and widely severed isles and continents, it is destined to be known, and illustrative of the nature of Saxon serfdom in the twelfth century of our era, is dedicated, as a slight token of great esteem, of gratitude for many good offices. and of friendship, which, he hopes and wishes, will stand all tests of time and change, unaltered,

By his sincere friend and servant,

HENRY WM. HERBERT.

The Cedars, July 20, 1855.

PREFACE.

It is, perhaps, unfortunate that the period and, in some degree, the scene of my present work, coincide nearly with those of the most magnificent and gorgeous of historical romances, Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe.

It is hoped, however, that—notwithstanding this similarity, and the fact that in both works the interest turns in some degree on the contrast between the manners of the Saxon and Norman inhabitants of the isle, and the state of things preceding the fusion of the two races into one—notwithstanding, also, that in each a portion of the effect depends on the introduction of a judicial combat, or "Wager of Battle"—the resemblance will be found to be external and incidental only, and that, neither in matter, manner, nor subject, is there any real similarity between the books, much less any imitation or absurd attempt, on my part, at rivalry with that which is admitted to be incomparable. It will be seen, at once, by those who have the patience to peruse the following pages, that I have aimed at something more than a mere delineation of outward habits, customs, and details of martial or pacific life; that I have entered largely into the condition of classes, the peculiar institution of Serfdom, or White Slavery, as it existed among our own ancestors—that portion of whom, from which our blood is in the largest degree descended, being the servile population of the island—in the twelfth century, and the steps which led to its gradual abolition.

In doing this, I have been unavoidably led into the necessity of dealing with the ancient jurisprudence of our race, the common law of the land, the institution of Trial by Jury, and that *singular feature* in our old judicial system, the reference of cases

to the direct decision of the Almighty by Wager of Battle, or, as it was also called, "the Judgment of God."

I will here merely observe that, while the gist of my tale lies in the adventures and escape of a fugitive Saxon Slave from the tyranny of his Norman Lord, my work contains no reference to the peculiar institution of any portion of this country, nor conceals any oblique insinuation against, or covert attack upon, any part of the inhabitants of the Continent, or any interest guaranteed to them by the Constitution. Nevertheless, I would recommend no person to open a page of this volume, who is prepared to deny that slavery *per se* is an evil and a wrong, and its effects deteriorating to all who are influenced by its contact, governors alike and governed, since they will find nothing agreeable, but much adverse to their way of thinking.

That it is an evil and a wrong, in itself, and a source of serious detriment to all parties concerned, I can not but believe; and that, like all other wrongs and evils, it will in the end, by God's wisdom, be provided for and pass away, without violence or greater indirect wrong and evil, I both believe and hope.

But I neither arrogate to myself the wisdom of imagining how this is to be peacefully brought about in the lapse of ages, nor hesitate to dissent from the intemperance of those who would cut the Gordian knot, like Alexander, with the sword, reckless if the same blow should sever the sacred bonds that consolidate the fabric of the Union.

HENRY WM. HERBERT.

THE CEDARS, September, 1st., 1855.

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SHERWOOD FOREST;

OR,

WAGER OF BATTLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE FOREST.

"He rode half a mile the way;
He saw no light that came of day;
Then came he to a river broad,
Never man over such one rode;
Within he saw a place of green,
Such one had he never erst seen."

EARLY METRICAL ROMAUNTS. GUY OF WARWICK.

In the latter part of the twelfth century—when, in the reign of Henry II., fourth successor of the Conqueror, and grandson of the first prince of that name, known as Beauclerc, the condition of the vanquished Saxons had begun in some sort to amend, though no fusion of the races had as yet commenced, and tranquillity was partially restored to England—the greater part of the northern counties, from the Trent to the mouths of Tyne and Solway, was little better than an unbroken chase or forest, with the exception of the fiefs of a few great barons, or the territories of a few cities and free borough towns; and thence, northward to the Scottish frontier, all was a rude and

pathless desert of morasses, moors, and mountains, untrodden save by the foot of the persecuted Saxon outlaw.

In the West and North Ridings of the great and important Shire of York, there were, it is true, already a few towns of more than growing importance; several of which had been originally the sites, or had grown up in the vicinity and under the shelter of Roman Stative encampments; whereof not a few of them have retained the evidence in their common termination, *caster*, while others yet retain the more modern Saxon appellations. Of these two classes, Doncaster, Pontefract, Rotherham, Sheffield, Ripon, may be taken as examples, which were even then flourishing, and, for the times, even opulent manufacturing boroughs, while the vastly larger and more wealthy commercial places, which have since sprung up, mushroom-like, around them, had then neither hearths nor homes, names nor existence.

In addition to these, many great lords and powerful barons already possessed vast demesnes and manors, and had erected almost royal fortalices, the venerable ruins of which still bear evidence to the power and the martial spirit of the Norman lords of England; and even more majestic and more richly endowed institutions of the church, such as Fountains, Jorvaulx, and Bolton Abbayes, still the wonder and reproach of modern architecture, and the admiration of modern artists, had created around themselves garden-like oases among the green glades and grassy aisles of the immemorial British forests; while, emulating the example of their feudal or clerical superiors, many a military tenant, many a gray-frocked friar, had reared his tower of strength, or built his lonely cell, upon some *mont-surrounded mount*, or in some bosky dingle of the wood.

In the East Riding, all to the north of the ancient city of the Shire, even then famous for its minster and its castle, even then the see and palace of the second archbishop of the realm, was wilder yet, ruder and more uncivilized. Even to this day, it is, comparatively speaking, a bleak and barren region, overswept by the cold gusts from the German ocean, abounding more in dark and stormy wolds than in the cheerful green of copse or wildwood, rejoicing little in pasture, less in tillage, and boasting of nothing superior to the dull market towns of the interior, and the small fishing villages nested among the crags of its iron coast.

Most pitilessly had this district been ravaged by the Conqueror and his immediate successor, after its first desperate and protracted resistance to the arms of the Norman; after the Saxon hope of England fell, to arise no more, upon the bloody field of Hastings; and after each one of the fierce Northern risings.

The people were of the hard, old, stubborn, Danish stock, more pertinacious, even, and more stubborn, than the enduring Saxon, but with a dash of a hotter and more daring spirit than belonged to their slower and more sluggish brethren.

These men would not yield, could not be subdued by the iron-sheathed cavalry of the intrusive kings. They were destroyed by them, the lands were swept bare,* the buildings burned, the churches desecrated. Manors, which under the native rule of the Confessor had easily yielded sixty shillings of annual rent, without distress to their occupants, scarcely paid five to their foreign lords; and estates, which under the

* Omnia sunt wasta. Modo omnino wasta. Ex maxima parte *wasta.—Doomsday Book*, vol. i. fol. 309.

ancient rule opulently furnished forth a living to two* English gentlemen of rank with befitting households, now barely supported two miserable Saxon cultivators, slaves of the soil, paying their foreign lords, with the blood of their hands and the sweat of their brows, scarcely the twelfth part of the revenue drawn from them by the old proprietors.

When, in a subsequent insurrection, the Norman king again marched northward, in full resolve to carry his conquering arms to the frontiers of Scotland, and, sustained by his ferocious energy, did actually force his way through the misty moorlands and mountainous mid-regions of Durham, Northumberland, and Westmoreland, he had to traverse about sixty miles of country, once not the least fertile of his newly-conquered realm, in which his mail-clad men-at-arms saw neither green leaves on the trees, nor green crops in the field; for the ax and the torch had done their work, not negligently; passed neither standing roof nor burning hearth; encountered neither human being nor cattle of the field; only the wolves, which had become so numerous from desuetude to the sight of man, that they scarce cared to fly before the clash and clang of the marching squadrons.

To the northward and north-westward, yet, of Yorkshire, including what are now Lancashire, Westmoreland, Northumberland, and Cumberland, though the Conqueror, in his first irresistible prosecution of red-handed victory, had marched and countermarched across them, there was, even at the time of my narrative, when nearly a century had fled, little if any thing of permanent progress or civilization, beyond the estab-

* Duo Taini tenueri. ibi sunt ii villani cum I carruca. valuit xl solidos. *modo iiii sol.—Ibid.* vol. i. fol. 845.

lishment of a few feudal holds and border fortresses, each with its petty hamlet clustered beneath its shelter. The marches, indeed, of Lancashire, toward its southern extremity, were in some degree permanently settled by military colonists, in not a few instances composed of Flemings, as were the Welch frontiers of the neighboring province of Cheshire, planted there to check the inroads of the still unconquered Cymri, to the protection of whose mountains, and late-preserved independence, their whilom enemies, the now persecuted Saxons, had fled in their extremity.

It is from these industrious artisans, then the scorn of the high-born men-at-arms, that the trade had its origin, which has filled the bleak moors, and every torrent gorge of Lancaster and Western York, with a teeming population and a manufacturing opulence, such as, elsewhere, the wide earth has not witnessed. Even at the time of which I write, the clack of their fulling-mills, the click of their looms, and the din of their trip-hammers, resounded by the side of many a lonely Cheshire stream; but all to the north and westward, where the wildest hillsides and most forbidding glens are now more populous and richer than the greatest cities of those days, all was desolate as the aspect of the scenery, and inhospitable as the climate that lowers over it in constant mist and darkness.

Only in the south-western corner of Westmoreland, the lovely land of lakes and mountains and green pastoral glens, beyond Morecambe Bay and the treacherous sands of Lancaster, had the Norman nobles, as the entering tide swept upward through the romantic glens and ghylls of Netherdale and Wharfedale, past the dim peaks of Pennigant and Ingle*borough, establish*ed their lines in those pleasant places, and

reared their castellated towers, and laid out their noble chases, where they had little interruption to apprehend from the tyrannic forest laws of the Norman kings, which, wherever their authority extended, bore not more harshly on the Saxon serf than on the Norman noble.

To return, however, toward the midland counties, and the rich regions with which this brief survey of Northern England in the early years of the twelfth century commenced—a vast tract of country, including much of the northern portions of Nottingham and Derbyshire, and all the south of the West Riding of York, between the rivers Trent and Eyre, was occupied almost exclusively by that most beautiful and famous of all British forests, the immemorial and time-honored Sherwood—theme of the oldest and most popular of English ballads—scene of the most stirring of the old Romaunts—scene of the most magnificent of modern novels, incomparable Ivanhoe—home of that half historic personage, King of the Saxon greenwoods, Robin Hood, with all his northern merrymen, Scathelock, and Friar Tuck, and Little John, Allen-a-Dale, wild forest minstrel, and the blythe woodland queen, Maid Marion—last leafy fortalice, wherein, throughout all England proper, lingered the sole remains of Saxon hardihood and independence—red battle-field of the unsparing conflicts of the rival Roses.

There stand they still, those proud, majestic kings of bygone ages; there stand they still, the

> "Hallowed oaks,
> Who, British-born, the last of British race,
> Hold their primeval rights by nature's charter,
> *Not at* the nod of Cæsar;"

there stand they still, erect, earth-fast, and massive, grasping the green-sward with their gnarled and knotty roots, waving "their free heads in the liberal air," full of dark, leafy umbrage clothing their lower limbs, but far aloft, towering with bare, stag-horned, and splintered branches toward the unchanged sky from which so many centuries of sunshine have smiled down, of tempest frowned upon their "secular life of ages."

There stand they, still, I say; alone, or scattered here and there, or in dark, stately groups, adorning many a noble park of modern days, or looming up in solemn melancholy upon some "one-tree hill," throughout the fertile region which lies along the line of that great ancient road, known in the Saxon days as Ermine-street, but now, in common parlance, called "the Dukeries," from seven contiguous domains, through which it sweeps, of England's long-lined nobles.

Not now, as then, embracing in its green bosom sparse tracts of cultivated lands, with a few borough-towns, and a few feudal keeps, or hierarchal abbayes, but itself severed into divers and far-distant parcels, embosomed in broad stretches of the deepest meadows, the most teeming pastures, or girded on its swelling, insulated knolls by the most fertile corn-lands, survives the ancient Sherwood.

Watered by the noblest and most beautiful of northern rivers, the calm and meadowy Trent, the sweet sylvan Idle, the angler's favorite, fairy-haunted Dee, the silver Eyre, mountainous Wharfe, and pastoral Ure and Swale; if I were called upon to name the very garden-gem of England, I know none that compares with this seat of the old-time Saxon forest.

You can not now travel a mile through that midland region

of plenty and prosperity without hearing the merry chime of village bells from many a country spire, without passing the happy doors of hundreds of low cottage homes, hundreds of pleasant hamlets courting the mellow sunshine from some laughing knoll, or nestling in the shrubberies of some orchard-mantled hollow.

Nor are large, prosperous, and thriving towns, rich marts of agricultural produce, or manufactures of wealth richer than gold of El Dorado, so far apart but that a good pedestrian may travel through the streets of a half a dozen in a day's journey, and yet stand twenty times agaze between their busy precincts in admiration—to borrow the words of the great northern Romancer, with the scene and period of whose most splendid effort my humble tale unfortunately coincides—in admiration of the "hundreds of broad-headed, short-stemmed, wide-branched oaks, which had witnessed, perhaps, the stately march of the Roman soldiers."

And here, let none imagine these to be mere exaggerations, sprung from the overflowing brain of the Romancer, for, not fifty miles distant from the scene described above, there is yet to be seen a venerable patriarch of Sherwood, which boasted still, within a few short years, some garlands of surviving green—the oak of Cowthorpe—probably the largest in the island; which is to this day the boundary corner of two marching properties, and has been such since it was constituted so in Doomsday Book, wherein it was styled *quercum ingentem*, the gigantic oak.

Since the writing of those words eight centuries have passed, and there are many reasons for believing that those centuries have added not an inch to its circumference, but

rather detracted from its vigor and its growth; and, to me, it seems far more probable that it was a full-grown tree, with all its leafy honors rife upon it, when the first Cæsar plunged, waist-deep, into the surges of the British Channel from the first Roman prow, than that it should have sprung up, like the gourd of a Jonah, in a single night, to endure a thousand years' decay without entirely perishing.

In those days, however, a man might ride from "eve to morn, from morn to dewy eve," and hear no sound more human than the deep "belling" of the red deer, if it chanced to be in the balmy month of June; the angry grunt of the tusky boar, startled from his mud-bath in some black morass; or, it may be, the tremendous rush of the snow-white, black-maned bull, crashing his way through shivered saplings and rent under-brush, mixed with the hoarse cooings of the cushat dove, the rich song-gushes of the merle and mavis, or the laughing scream of the green woodpecker.

Happy, if in riding all day in the green leafy twilight, which never, at high noon, admitted one clear ray of daylight, and, long before the sun was down, degenerated into murky gloom, he saw no sights more fearful than the rabbits glancing across the path, and disappearing in the thickets; or the slim doe, daintily picking her way among the heather, with her speckled fawns frolicking around her. Thrice happy, if, as night was falling, cold and gray, the tinkling of some lonely chapel bell might give him note where some true anchorite would share his bed of fern, and meal of pulse and water, or jolly clerk of Copmanhurst would broach the pipe of Malvoisie, bring pasties of the doe, to greet the belated wayfarer.

Such was the period, such the region, when, on a glorious

July morning, so early that the sun had not yet risen high enough to throw one sweeping yellow ray over the carpet of thick greensward between the long aisles of the forest, or checker it with one cool shadow—while the dew still hung in diamonds on every blade of grass, on every leaf of bush or brackens; while the light blue mists were still rising, thinner and thinner as they soared into the clear air, from many a woodland pool or sleepy streamlet—two men, of the ancient Saxon race, sat watching, as if with some eager expectation, on a low, rounded, grassy slope, the outpost, as it seemed, of a chain of gentle hills, running down eastward to the beautiful brimfull Idle.

Around the knoll on which they sat, covered by the short mossy turf, and over-canopied by a dozen oaks, such as they have been described, most of them leafy and in their prime, but two or three showing above their foliage the gray stag-horns of age, the river, clear as glass, and bright as silver, swept in a semicircle, fringed with a belt of deep green rushes and broad-leaved water-lilies, among which two or three noble swans—so quietly sat the watchers on the hill—were leading forth their little dark-gray black-legged cygnets, to feed on the aquatic flies and insects, which dimpled the tranquil river like a falling shower. Across the stream was thrown a two-arched freestone bridge, high-backed and narrow, and half covered with dense ivy, the work, evidently, of the Roman conquerors of the island, from which a yellow, sandy road wound deviously upward, skirting the foot of the rounded hill, and showing itself in two or three ascending curves, at long intervals, above the tree-tops, till it was lost in the distant forest; while, far away to the eastward, the topmost turret of what

seemed a tall Norman keep, with a square banner drooping from its staff in the breezeless air, towering above the dim-wood distance, indicated whither it led so indirectly.

In the rear of the slope or knoll, so often mentioned, was a deep tangled dell, or dingle, filled with a thickset growth of holly, birch, and alder, with here a feathery juniper, and there a graceful fern bush; and behind this arose a higher ridge, clothed with tall, thrifty oaks and beeches, of the second growth, and cutting off in that direction all view beyond its own near horizon.

It was not in this direction, however, nor up the road toward the remote castle, nor down across the bridge over the silver Idle, that the watchers turned their eager eyes, expecting the more eagerly, as, at times, the distant woods before them—lying beyond a long stretch of native savanna, made probably by the beaver, while that industrious animal yet figured in the British fauna—seemed to mourn and labor with a deep, indefinite murmuring sound, half musical, half solemn, but liker to an echo than to any known utterance of any living human being. It was too varied for the noise of falling waters, too modulated for the wind harp of the west, which was sighing fitfully among the branches. Eagerly they watched, with a wild look of almost painful expectation in their keen, light-blue eyes, resembling in no respect the lively glance with which the jovial hunter awaits his gallant quarry; there was something that spoke of apprehension in the haggard eye—perhaps the fear of ill-performing an unwilling duty.

And if it were so, it was not unnatural; not at that day, *alas!* *uncommon*; for dress, air, aspect, and demeanor, all told

them at first sight, to be of that most wretched, if not most abject class, the Saxon serfs of England. They were both clad alike, in short, close-cut frocks, or tunics, of tanned leather, gathered about their waists with broad buff belts, fastened with brazen buckles, in each of which stuck a long buckhorn-hafted two-edged Sheffield whittle; both were bareheaded, both shod with heavy-clouted shoes, and both wore, soldered about their necks, broad brazen dog-collars, having the brand of their condition, with their own names and qualities, and that and the condition of their master.

Here, however, ended the direct resemblance, even of their garb; for, while the taller and better formed man of the two, who was also somewhat the darker haired and finer featured, wore a species of rude leather gauntlets, with buskins of the same material, reaching as high as the binding of the frock, the other man was bare-armed and bare-legged also, with the exception of an inartificial covering of thongs of boar-hide, plaited from the ankle to the knee upward. The latter also carried no weapon but a long quarter-staff, though he held a brace of noble snow-white alans—the wire-haired grayhounds of the day—in a leash of twisted buckskin; while his brother —for so strong was their personal resemblance, that their kinship could scarcely be doubted—carried a short, steel-headed javelin in his hand, and had beside him, unrestrained, a large coarser hound, of a deep brindled gray color, with clear, hazel eyes; and what was strange to say, in view of the condition of this man, unmaimed, according to the cruel forest code of the Norman kings.

This difference in the apparel, and, it may be added, in the *neatness, well-being*, and general superior bearing of him who

was the better armed, might perhaps be explained by a glance at the engraving on the respective collars. For while that of the one, and he the better clad and better looking, bore that he was "Kenric the Dark, thral of the land to Philip de Morville," that of the other stamped him "Eadwulf the Red, gros thral" of the same Norman lord.

Both Saxon serfs of the mixed Northern race, which, largely intermixed with Danish blood, produced a nobler, larger-limbed, loftier, and more athletic race than the pure Saxons of the southern counties—they had fallen, with the properties of the Saxon thane, to whom they had belonged in common, into the hands of the foreign conqueror. Yet Kenric was of that higher class—for there were classes even among these miserable beings—which could not be sold, nor parted from the soil on which they were born, but at their own option; while Eadwulf, although his own twin-brother, for some cause into which it were needless to inquire, could be sold at any time, or to any person, or even swapped for an animal, or gambled away at the slightest caprice of his owner.

To this may be added, that, probably from caprice, or perhaps from some predilection for his personal appearance and motions, which were commanding, and even graceful, or for his bearing, which was evidently less churlish than that of his countrymen in general, his master had distinguished him in some respects from the other serfs of the soil; and, without actually raising him to any of the higher offices reserved to the Normans, among whom the very servitors claimed to be, and indeed were, gentlemen, had employed him in subordinate stations under his huntsman, and intrusted him so far as *occasionally to* permit his carrying arms into the field.

With him, as probably is the case in most things, the action produced reaction; and what had been the effect of causes, came in time to be the cause of effects. Some real or supposed advantages procured for him the exceeding small dignity of some poor half-conceded rights; and those rights, the effect of perhaps an imaginary superiority, soon became the causes of something more real—of a sentiment of half independence, a desire of achieving perfect liberty.

In this it was that he excelled his brother; but we must not anticipate. What were the characters of the men, and from their characters what events grew, and what fates followed, it is for the reader of these pages to decipher.

After our men had tarried where we found them, waiting till expectation should grow into certainty for above half an hour, and the morning had become clear and sunny, the distant indescribable sound, heard indistinctly in the woods, ripened into that singularly modulated, all sweet, but half-discordant crash, which the practiced ear is not slow to recognize as the cry of a large pack of hounds, running hard on a hot scent in high timber.

Anon the notes of individual hounds could be distinguished; now the sharp, savage treble of some fleet brach, now the deep bass of some southron talbot, rising above or falling far below the diapason of the pack—and now, shrill and clear, the long, keen flourish of a Norman bugle.

At the last signal, Kenric rose silently but quickly to his feet, while his dog, though evidently excited by the approaching rally of the chase, remained steady at his couchant position, expectant of his master's words. The snow-white alans,

on the contrary, fretted, and strained, and whimpered, fighting against their leashes, while Eadwulf sat still, stubborn or stupid, and animated by no ambition, by no hope, perhaps scarce even by a fear.

But, as the chase drew nigher, "Up, Eadwulf!" cried his brother, quickly, "up, and away. Thou 'lt have to stretch thy legs, even now, to reach the four lane ends, where the relays must be, when the stag crosses. Up, man, I say! Is this the newer spirit you spoke of but now? this the way you would earn largess whereby to win your freedom? Out upon it! that I should say so of my own brother, but thou 'lt win nothing but the shackles, if not the thong. Away! lest my words prove troth."

Eadwulf the Red arose with a scowl, but without a word, shook himself like a water-spaniel, and set off at a dogged swinging trot, the beautiful high-bred dogs bounding before his steps like winged creatures, and struggling with the leashes that debarred their perfect freedom—the man degraded, by the consciousness of misery and servitude, into the type of a soulless brute—the brutes elevated, by high breeding, high cultivation, and high treatment, almost into the similitude of intellectual beings.

Kenric looked after him, as he departed, with a troubled eye, and shook his head, as he lost sight of him among the trees in the fore-ground. "Alack!" he said, "for Eadwulf, my brother! He waxes worse, not better." But, as he spoke, a nearer crash of the hounds' music came pealing through the tree-tops, and with a stealthy step he crossed over the summit to the rear of the hillock, where he concealed himself behind

the boll of a stupendous oak, making his grayhound lie down in tall fern beside him.

The approaching hounds came to a sudden fault, and silence, deep as that of haunted midnight, fell on the solitary place.

CHAPTER II.

THE GOOD SERVICE.

"'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good green wood,
When mavis and merle are singing;
When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing."

LADY OF THE LAKE.

THERE is something exceedingly singular in the depth of almost palpable silence which seems to fall upon a tract of woodland country, on the sudden cessation of a full cry of stag-hounds; which cry has in itself, apart from its stirring harmony of discords, something of cheerfulness and sociality, conveyed by its sound, even to the lonely wayfarer.

Although, during that hush of the woods, the carol of the birds, the hum of insects, the breezy voice of the tree-tops, the cooing of the ringdove, the murmur of falling waters, and all the undistinguished harmonies of nature, unheard before, and drowned in that loud brattling, sound forth and fill the listener's ear, yet they disturb it not, nor seem to dissipate, but rather to augment, the influence of the silence.

Kenric had not the educated sentiments which lead the most highly civilized of men to sympathize most deeply with the beautiful sounds and sights of nature. Yet still, as is mostly the case with dwellers in the forest or on the wild

mountain tops, he had a certain untutored eye to take in and note effects—an unlearned ear with which to receive pleasant sounds, and acquire a fuller pleasure from them than he could perfectly comprehend or explain to his own senses. And now, when the tumult of the chase had fallen asleep, he leaned against the gnarled and mossy trunk, with his boar-spear resting listlessly against his thigh, and a quiet, meditative expression replacing on his grave, stern features the earnest and excited gaze, with which he had watched the approach of the hunt.

The check, however, lasted not long; the clear, shrill challenge of a favorite hound soon rose from the woodlands, accompanied by loud cheers, "Taró, Taró, tantáro!" and followed by the full crash of the reassembled pack, as they rallied to their leader, and struck again on the hot and steaming scent.

Nearer and nearer came the cry, and ever and anon uprose, distant and mellow, the cadenced flourishes of the clear French horns, giving new life to the trackers of the deer, and filling the hearts of the riders with almost mad excitement. Ere long, several cushats might be seen wheeling above the tree-tops, disturbed from their procreant cradles by the progress of the fierce din below them. A moment afterward, dislodged from their feeding-grounds along the boggy margin of the Idle, a dozen woodcock flapped up from the alder-bushes near the brink, and came drifting along before the soft wind, on their feebly whistling pinions, and, fluttering over the head of the watcher, dropped into the shelter of the dingle in his rear, with its thick shade of varnished hollies. The next instant, a superb red deer, with high branching antlers, leaped with a

mighty spring over and partly through the crashing branches of the thicket, and swept with long, graceful bounds across the clear savanna. A single shout, "Tayho!" announced the appearance of the quarry in the open, and awakened a responsive clangor of the horns, which, all at once, sounded their gay tantivy, while the sharp, redoubled clang of the whips, and the cries of "arriere! arriere!" which succeeded, told Kenric that the varlets and attendants of the chase were busy stopping the slow hounds, whose duty was accomplished so soon as the stag was forced into the field; and which were now to be replaced by the fleet and fiery alans, used to course and pull down the quarry by dint of downright strength and speed.

The stretch of green savanna, of which I have spoken as running along the northern margin of the Idle, below the wooded ridges of the lower hills, could not have been less than four miles in length, and was traversed by two sandy paths, unguarded by any fence or hedge-row, which intersected each other within a few hundred yards of the belt of underwood, whence the hunted deer had broken covert. At this point of intersection, known as the Four-Lane-Ends, a general term in Yorkshire for such cross-roads, stood a gigantic oak, short-boughed, but of vast diameter, with gnarled and tortuous branches sweeping down almost to the rank greensward which surrounded it, and concealing any person who stood within their circumference, as completely as if he were within an artificial pavilion.

That way, winged by terror, bounded the beautiful hart royal; for no less did his ten-tined antlers, with their huge cupped tops denote him; and, though it presented no real ob-

stacle to his passage, when he saw the yellow road, winding like a rivulet through the deep grass, he gathered all his feet together, made four or five quick, short buck-leaps, and then, soaring into the air like a bird taking wing, swept over it, and alighted ten feet on the hither side, apparently without an effort—a miracle of mingled grace, activity, and beauty.

As he alighted, he paused a moment, turned his long, swan-like neck, and gazed backward for a few seconds with his large, lustrous, melancholy eyes, until, seeing no pursuers, nor hearing any longer the crash which had aroused him from his harbor, he tossed his antlers proudly, and sailed easily and leisurely across the gentle green.

But at this moment, Eadwulf the Red, who was stationed beneath that very oak-tree with the first relay of grayhounds, uttered a long, shrill whoop, and casting loose the leashes, slipped the two snow-white alans on the quarry. The whoop was answered immediately, and, at about half a mile's distance from the spot where the deer had issued, two princely-looking Norman nobles, clearly distinguishable as such by their richly-furred short hunting-coats, tight hose, and golden spurs of knighthood, came into sight, spurring their noble Andalusian coursers—at that period the fleetest strain in the world, which combined high blood with the capacity to endure the weight of a man-at-arms in his full panoply—to their fullest speed; and followed by a long train of attendants—some mounted, some on foot, huntsmen and verdurers, and yeomen prickers, with falconers, and running footmen, some leading alans in the leash, and some with nets and spears for the chase of the wild boar, which still roamed not unfrequent

in the woody swamps that intersected the lower grounds and lined many of the river beds of Sherwood.

It was a gay and stirring scene. The meadow, late so quiet in its uniform green garniture, was now alive with fluttering plumes, and glittering with many-colored scarfs and cassocks, noble steeds of all hues, blood-bay and golden chestnut, dappled and roan, and gleamy blacks, and one, on which rode the foremost of the noble Normans, white as December's snow; and in the middle of the picture, aroused by the shouts in his rear, and aware of the presence of his fresh pursuers, the superb stag, with his neck far stretched out, and his grand antlers pressed close along his back, straining every nerve, and literally seeming to fly over the level sward; while the snow-white alans, with their fierce black eyes glowing like coals of fire, and their blood-red tongues lolling from their open jaws, breathless and mute, but stanch as vindictive fiends, hung hard upon his traces.

At first, the hunted stag laid his course upward, diagonally, aiming for the forest land on the hillside; and although, at first, he had scarce thirty yards of law, and was, moreover, so nearly matched in speed by his relentless enemies, that, for many hundred yards, he neither gained nor lost a yard's distance, still he gradually gathered way, as yards fell into furlongs, furlongs into miles, and drew ahead slowly, but surely, until it appeared almost certain that he must soon gain the shelter of the tall timber, where the keen eyes of the alans, impotent of scent, would be worthless in pursuit, and where he must again be dislodged by slow hounds, or the chase abandoned.

Just as he was within fifty yards, however, of the desired

covert's edge, Sir Philip de Morville—for he it was who rode the foremost—raised his bugle to his lips, and sounded it long and shrill, in a most peculiar strain, to which a whoop responded, almost from the point for which the stag was making, and, at the same time, a second brace of alans—one a jet black, and the other a deep-brindled fawn color—darted out, and flew down the gentle slope, right at the head of the yet unwearied quarry.

Springing high into air, he instantly made a perfect demivolte, with an angry toss of his antlers, and shot, with redoubled efforts in the contrary direction, cutting across the very noses of his original pursuers, which, when they had turned likewise, were brought within fifty yards of his haunches, and away like an arrow toward the bridge across the Idle. From this moment, the excitement of the spectacle was redoubled; nor could any one, even the coldest of spectators, have looked on without feeling the blood course, like molten lava, through his veins.

It was no longer a stern chase, where the direct speed only of the rival and hostile animals was brought into play; for, as the stag turned to the left about, the black and brindled alans, which had been started at his head, were thrown by the movement some thirty yards wide on his right quarter; while the white dogs, who had pursued him so savagely from the beginning, were brought to a position nearly equidistant on his left flank.

Henceforth it was a course of fleet bounds, short turns, and windings of wonderful agility; and at this instant a new spectator, or spectatress rather, was added to the scene.

This was a young girl of some sixteen or seventeen years,

at the utmost, beautifully formed, and full of easy grace and symmetry, who came careering down the road, from the direction of the castle, as fast as the flying bounds of a beautiful red roan Arab—with mane and tail of silver, scarcely larger or less fleet than the deer in the plain below—could carry her.

Her face and features were not less beautiful than her form; the latter would have been perfectly Grecian and classical but for the slightest possible upward turn in the delicate thin nose, which imparted an arch, half-saucy meaning to her rich, laughing face. Her eyes were clear, bright blue, with long, dark lashes, a pure complexion, ripe, crimson lips, and a flood of dark auburn tresses, which had escaped from the confinement of her purple velvet bonnet, and flowed on the light breeze in a flood of glittering ringlets, completed her attractions.

Her garb was the rich attire peculiar to her age, rank, and the period of which we write—the most picturesque, perhaps, and appropriate to set off the perfections of a female figure of rare symmetry, that ever has been invented. A closely-fitting jacket, following every curve and sinuous line of her beauteous shape, of rich green velvet, furred deeply at the cape and cuffs with white swansdown, and bordered at the hips by a broad band of the same pure garniture; loose-flowing skirts, of heavy sendal of the same hue, a crimson velvet shoulder-belt supporting a richly-embroidered hawking-pouch, a floating plume of white ostrich feathers, and a crimson-hooded merlin on her wrist, with golden bells and jesses, completed her person's adornment; and combined, with the superb housings and velvet headstall of her exquisite palfrey, to form a charming picture.

So rapidly did she ride, that a single page—a boy of ten or twelve years, who followed her—spurring with all his might, could scarcely keep her in sight; and, as she careered down toward the bridge, which she had almost reached, was lost to view in the valley immediately behind the ridge, the southern slope of which she was descending.

The stag, by this time, which had been aiming hitherto to cross the road on which she was galloping, had been turned several times by the fresh relay of alans, which were untired and unimpaired of speed, and had been thus edged gradually away from the road and bridge, toward the white dogs, which were now running, as it is technically termed, *cunning*, laying up straight ahead, on a parallel line, and almost abreast with the deer. Now they drew forward, shot ahead, and passed him. At once, seeing his peril, he wheeled on his haunches, and, with a desperate last effort, headed once more for the road, striving, for life! for life! to cut across the right-hand couple of deer grayhounds; but, fleet as he was, fleeter now did they show themselves, and once more he was forced to turn, only to find the white dogs directly in his path.

One, the taller and swifter of the two, was a few yards in advance of the other, and, as the stag turned full into his foaming jaws, sprang at its throat with a wild yell. But the deer bounded too, and bounded higher than the dog, and, as they met in mid air, its keen, sharp-pointed hoofs struck the brave staghound in the chest, and hurled him to the ground stunned, if not lifeless. Four strides more, and he swept like a swallow over a narrow reach of the little river; and then, having once more brought the three surviving hounds directly astern, turned to the westward along the river shore, and cantering

away lightly, no longer so hard pressed, seemed likely to make his escape toward a broad belt of forest, which lay some mile and a half that way, free from ambuscade or hidden peril.

At this turn of the chase, fiercer was the excitement, and wilder waxed the shouting and the bugle blasts of the discomfited followers of the chase, none of whom were nearer to the bridge than a full half mile. But so animated was the beautiful young lady, whose face had flushed crimson, and then turned ashy pale, with the sudden excitement of that bold exploit of dog and deer, that she clapped her hands joyously together, unhooding and casting loose her merlin, though without intention, in the act, and crying, gayly, "Well run, brave Hercules! well leaped, brave Hart o' Grease;" and, as she saw the hunters scattered over the wide field, none so near to the sport as she, she flung her arm aloft, and with her pretty girlish voice set up a musical whoop of defiance.

Now, at the very moment when the deer's escape seemed almost more than certain—as often is the case in human affairs, no less than cervine—"a new foe in the field" changed the whole aspect of the case. The great brindled gray deerhound, which had lain thus far peaceful by Kenric's side, seeing what had passed, sprang out of the fern, unbidden, swam across the Idle in a dozen strokes, and once more headed the hunted deer.

The young girl was now within six horses' length of the bridge, when the deer, closely pursued by its original assailants, and finding itself now intercepted by Kenric's dog "Kilbuck" in front, turned once again in the only direction now left it, and wheeled across the bridge at full speed, black with sweat, flecked with white foam-flakes, its tongue hanging from

its swollen jaws, its bloodshot eyeballs almost starting from its head, mad with terror and despair. All at once, the Arab horse and the gorgeous trappings of the rider glanced across its line of vision; fire seemed, to the affrighted girl, to flash from its glaring eyes, as it lowered its mighty antlers, and charged with a fierce, angry bray.

Pale as death, the gallant girl yet retained her courage and her faculties; she pulled so sharply on her left rein, striking the palfrey on the shoulder with her riding-rod, that he wheeled short on his haunches, and presented his right flank to the infuriated deer, protecting his fair rider by the interposition of his body.

No help was nigh, though the Norman nobles saw her peril, and spurred madly to the rescue; though Kenric started from his lair with a portentous whoop, and, poising his boar spear, rushed down, in the hope to turn the onset to himself. But it was too late; and, strong as was his hand, and his eyes steady, he dared not to hurl such a weapon as that he held, in such proximity to her he would defend.

With an appalling sound, a soft, dead, crushing thrust, the terrible brow antlers were plunged into the defenseless flanks of the poor palfrey; which hung, for a second on the cruel prongs, and then, with a long, shivering scream, rolled over on its side, with collapsed limbs, and, after a few convulsive struggles, lay dead, with the lovely form of its mistress rolled under it, pale, motionless, with the long golden hair disordered in the dust, and the blue eyes closed, stunned, cold, and spiritless, at least, if not lifeless.

Attracted by the gay shoulder-belt of the poor girl, again the savage beast stooped to gore; but a strong hand was on

his antler, and a keen knife-point buried in his breast. Sore stricken he was, yet, not slain; and, rearing erect on his hind legs, he dealt such a storm of blows from his sharp hoofs, each cutting almost like a knife, about the head and shoulders of his dauntless antagonist, as soon hurled him, in no better condition than she, beside the lady he had risked so much to rescue.

Then the dogs closed and seized him, and savage and appalling was the strife of the fierce brutes, with long-drawn, choking sighs, and throttling yells, as they raved, and tore, and stamped, and battled, over the prostrate group.

It was a fearful sight that met the eyes of the first comer. He was the Norman who had ridden second in the chase, but now, having outstripped his friendly rival in the neck-or-nothing skurry that succeeded, thundered the first into the road, where the dogs were now mangling the slaughtered stag, and besmearing the pale face of the senseless girl with blood and bestial foam.

To spring from his saddle and drop on his knees beside her, was but a moment's work.

"My child! my child! they have slaughtered thee. Woe! woe!"

CHAPTER III.

THE GUERDON OF GOOD SERVICE.

"'T were better to die free, than live a slave."

EURIPIDES.

It was fortunate, for all concerned, that no long time elapsed before more efficient aid came on the ground, than the gentleman who first reached the spot, and who, although a member of that dauntless chivalry, trained from their cradles to endure hardship, to despise danger, and to look death steadfastly and unmoved in the face, was so utterly paralyzed by what he deemed, not unnaturally, the death of his darling, that he made no effort to relieve her from the weight of the slaughtered animal, though it rested partially on her lower limbs, and on one arm, which lay extended, nevertheless, as it had fallen, in the dust. But up came, in an instant, Philip de Morville, on his superb, snow-white Andalusian, a Norman baron to the life—tall, powerful, thin-flanked, deep-chested, with the high aquiline features and dark chestnut hair of his race, nor less with its dauntless valor, grave courtesy, and heart as impassive to fear or tenderness or pity, as his own steel hauberk. Up came esquires and pages, foresters and grooms, and springing tumultuously to the ground, under the

short, prompt orders of their lord, raised the dead palfrey bodily up, while Sir Philip drew the fair girl gently from under it, and raising her in his arms more tenderly than he had ever been known to entreat any thing, unless it were his favorite falcon, laid her on the short, soft greensward, under the shadow of one of the huge, broad-headed oaks by the wayside.

"Cheer thee, my noble lord and brother," he exclaimed, "the Lady Guendolen is not dead, nor like to die this time. 'T is only fear, and perchance her fall, for it was a heavy one, that hath made her faint. Bustle, knaves, bustle. Bring water from the spring yonder. Has no one a leathern bottiau? You, Damian, gallop, as if you would win your spurs of gold by riding, to the sumpter mule with the panniers. It should be at the palmer's spring by this time; for, hark, the bells from the gray brothers' chapel, in the valley by the river, are chiming for the noontide service. Bring wine and essences, electuaries and ambergris, if the refectioner have any with him. You, Raoul," he continued, addressing a sturdy, grim-featured old verdurer, who was hanging over the still senseless girl with an expression of solicitude hardly natural to his rugged and scar-seamed countenance, "take a led horse, and hie thee to the abbey; tell the good prior what hath befallen, and pray the brother mediciner he will ride this way, as speedily as he may; and you," turning to the old, white-haired seneschal, "send up some of the varlets to the castle, for the horse-litter; she may not ride home this day."

In the mean time, while he was accumulating order on order, while pages and horseboys, grooms and esquires, were galloping off, in different directions, as if with spurs of fire,

and while the barons themselves were awkwardly endeavoring to perform those ministrations for the fair young creature, which they were much more used themselves to receive at the hands of the softer sex, who were in those rude days often the chirurgeons and leeches, as well as the comforters and soothers of the bed of pain and sickness, than to do such offices for others, the bold defender of Guendolen—Kenric the dark-haired—lay in his blood, stark and cold, deemed dead, and quite forgotten, even by the lowest of the Norman varletry, who held themselves too noble to waste services upon a Saxon, much more upon a thral and bondsman.

They—such of them, that is to say, as were not needed in direct attendance on the persons of the nobles, or as had not been dispatched in search of aid—applied themselves, with characteristic zeal and eagerness, to tend and succor the nobler animals, as they held them, of the chase; while they abandoned their brother man and fellow-countryman, military Levites as they were, to his chances of life or death, without so much as even caring to ask or examine whether he were numbered with the living or the dead.

The palfrey was first seen to, and pronounced dead; when his rich housings were stripped off carefully, and cleaned as well as time and place permitted; when the carcass was dragged off the road, and concealed, for the moment, with fern leaves and boughs lopped from the neighboring bushes, while something was said among the stable boys of sending out some of the "dog Saxon serfs" to bury him on the morrow.

The deer was then dragged roughly whence it lay, across the breast of Kenric, in whose left shoulder one of its terrible

brow antlers had made a deep gash, while his right arm was badly shattered by a blow of its sharp hoofs. So careless were the men of inflicting pain on the living, or dishonor on the dead, that one of them, in removing the quarry, set his booted foot square on the Saxon's chest, and forced, by the joint effect of the pressure and the pain, a stifled, choking sound, half involuntary, half a groan, from the pale lips of the motionless sufferer. With a curse, and a slight, contemptuous kick, the Norman groom turned away, with his antlered burthen, muttering a ribald jest on "the death-grunt of the Saxon boar;" and drawing his keen woodknife, was soon deep in the mysteries of the *curée*, and deeper yet in blood and grease, prating of "nombles, briskets, flankards, and ravenbones," then the usual terms of the art of hunting, or butchery, whichever the reader chooses to call it, which are now probably antiquated. The head was cabbaged, as it was called, and, with the entrails, given as a reward to the fierce hounds, which glared with ravenous eyes on the gory carcass. Even its peculiar morsel was chucked to the attendant raven, the black bird of St. Hubert, which—free from any apprehension of the gentle hunters, who affected to treat him with respectful and reverential awe—sat on the stag-horned peak of an aged oak-tree, awaiting his accustomed portion, with an observant eye and an occasional croak. By-and-by, when the sumpter mule came up, with kegs of ale and bottiaus of mead and hypocras, and wine of Gascony and Anjou, before even the riders' throats were slaked by the generous liquor, the bridle-bits and cavessons, nose-bags and martingales of the coursers were removed, and liberal drenches were bestowed on them, partly in guerdon of past services, partly in

order to renew their strength and stimulate their valiant ardor.

Long ere this, however, fanned by two or three pages with fans of fern wreaths, and sprinkled with cold spring-water by the hands of her solicitous kinsman, the young girl had given symptoms of returning life, and a brighter expression returned to the dark, melancholy visage of her father.

Two or three long, faint, fluttering sighs came from her parted lips; and then, regular, though low and feeble, her breathing made itself heard, and her girlish bosom rose and fell responsive.

Her father, who had been chafing her hands assiduously, pressed one of them caressingly, at this show of returning animation, and raised it to his lips; when, awakening at the accustomed tenderness, her languid eyes opened, a faint light of intelligence shone forth from them, a pale glow of hectic color played over her face, and a smile glittered for a second on her quivering lips.

"Dear father," she whispered, faintly; but, the next moment, an expression of fear was visible in all her features, and a palpable shiver shook all her frame. "The stag!" she murmured; "the stag! save me, save"—and before the word, uttered simultaneously by the two lords—"He is dead, dear one," "He will harm no one any more"—had reached her ears, she again relapsed into insensibility, while with equal care, but renewed hope, they tended and caressed her.

But Kenric no one tended, no one caressed, save, "faithful still, where all were faithless found," the brindled staghound, "Killbuck," who licked his face assiduously, with his grim, gory tongue and lips, and besmearing his face with blood

and foam, rendered his aspect yet more terrible and death-like.

But now the returning messengers began to ride in, fast and frequent; first, old Raoul, the huntsman, surest, although not fleetest, and with him, shaking in his saddle, between the sense of peril and the perplexity occasioned him by the high, hard trot of the Norman war-horse pressed into such unwonted service, "like a boar's head in aspick jelly," the brother mediciner from the neighboring convent, with his wallet of simples and instruments of chirurgery.

By his advice, the plentiful application of cold water, with essences and stimulants in abundance, a generous draught of rich wine of Burgundy, and, when animation seemed thoroughly revived, the gentle breathing of a vein, soon restored the young lady to her perfect senses and complete self-possession, though she was sorely bruised, and so severely shaken that it was enjoined on her to remain perfectly quiet, where she lay, with a Lincoln-green furred hunting-cloak around her, until the arrival of the litter should furnish means of return to the castle of her father's host and kinsman.

And, in good season, down the hill, slowly and toilsomely came the horse-litter, poor substitute for a wheeled vehicle; but even thus the best, if not only, conveyance yet adopted for the transport of the wounded, the feeble, or the luxurious, and, as such, used only by the wealthy and the noble.

With the litter came three or four women; one or two, Norman maidens, the immediate attendants of the Lady Guendolen, and the others, Saxon slave girls of the household of Sir Philip de Morville, who hurried down, eager to gain favor by show of zealous duty, or actuated by woman's feel-

ings for woman's suffering, even in different grades and station.

The foremost of them all, bounding along with all the wild agility and free natural gracefulness of wood-nymph or bacchante, was a girl of seventeen or eighteen, not above the middle height of her sex, but plump as a partridge, with limbs exquisitely formed and rounded, a profusion of flaxen tresses floating unrestrained on the air, large dark-blue eyes, and a complexion all of milk and roses—the very type of rural Saxon youth and beauty.

As she outstripped all the rest in speed, she was the first to tender gentle service to the Lady Guendolen, who received her with a smile, calling her "Edith the Fair," and thanking her for her ready aid.

But, ere long, as the courtlier maidens arrived on the ground, poor Edith was set aside, as is too often the case with humble merit, while the others lifted the lady into the horse-litter, covered her with light and perfumed garlands, and soon had all ready for her departure.

But, in the mean time, Edith had turned a hasty glance around her; and descrying the inanimate body of the Saxon serf, lying alone and untended, moved by the gentle sympathy of woman for the humblest unknown sufferer, she hastened to assist, if assistance were still possible. But, as she recognized the limbs, stately, though cold and still, and the features, still noble through gore and defilement, a swift horror smote her, that she shook like a leaf, and fell, with a wild, thrilling shriek, "O, Kenric, Kenric!" on the body of the wounded man.

"Ha! what is this?" cried Sir Philip, who now first saw or

remembered what had passed. "How is this? Knaves, is there a man hurt here?"

"A Saxon churl, Beausire," replied one of the pages, flippantly, "who has gotten his brisket unseamed by his brother Saxon yonder!" and he pointed to the dead carcass of the stag.

"Our lady save us," murmured the gentle Guendolen, who seemed about to relapse into insensibility; "he saved my life, and have ye let him perish?"

"Now, by the splendor of our lady's eyes!" cried Yvo de Taillebois, the father of the fair young lady, "this is the gallant lad we saw afar, in such bold hand-to-hand encounter with yon mad brute. We have been ingrately, shamefully remiss. This must be amended, Philip de Morville."

"It shall, it shall, my noble friend," cried Philip; "and ye, dogs, that have let the man perish untended thus, for doing of his devoir better than all the best of ye, bestir yourselves. If the man die, as it seems like enow, ye shall learn ere ye are one day older, what pleasant bed-rooms are the vaults of Waltheofstow, and how tastes the water of the moat."

Meantime the monk trotted up, and, after brief examination, announced that, though badly hurt, his life was in no immediate peril, and set himself at once to comfort and revive him.

"He is not slain; he will not die, my child," said Sir Yvo, softly, bending over the litter to his pale lily, who smiled faintly as she whispered in reply—

"Dear father, nor be a slave any longer?"

"Not if I may redeem him," he answered; "but I will speak with Sir Philip at once. Meanwhile be tranquil, and let

them convey you homeward. Forward, there, with the litter —gently, forward !"

And, therewith, he turned and spoke eagerly to De Morville, who listened with a grave brow, and answered ;

"If it may be, my noble friend and brother. If it may be. But there are difficulties. Natheless, on my life, I desire to pleasure you."

"Nay ! it comports not with our name or station, that the noble Guendolen de Taillebois should owe life to a collared thral—a mere brute animal. My lord, your word on it ! He *must* be free, since Yvo de Taillebois is his debtor."

"My word *is* pledged on it," replied De Morville. "If it can be at all, it *shall* be. Nay, look not so black on it. It shall be. We will speak farther of it at the castle ! And now, lo ! how he opes his eyes and stares. He will be right, anon ; and ye, knaves, bear him to the castle, when the good brother bids ye, and gently, if ye would escape a reckoning with me. And now, good friends, to horse ! to horse ! The litter is half-way to the castle gates already. To horse ! to horse ! and God send us no more such sorry huntings."

CHAPTER IV.

THE NORMAN LORDS.

"Oh! it is excellent
To have a giant's strength, but tyrannous
To use it like a giant."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

HIGH up in a green, gentle valley, a lap among the hills, which, though not very lofty, were steep and abrupt with limestone crags and ledges, heaving themselves above the soil on their upper slopes and summits, perched on a small isolated knoll, or hillock, so regular in form, and so evenly scarped and rounded, that it bore the appearance of an artificial work, stood the tall Norman fortalice of Philip de Morville.

It was not a very large building, consisting principally of a single lofty square keep, with four lozenge-shaped turrets at the angles, attached to the body of the place, merlonwise, as it is termed in heraldry, or corner to corner, rising some twenty feet or more above the flat roof of the tower, which was surrounded with heavy projecting battlements widely overhanging the base, and pierced with crenelles for archery, and deep machicolations, by which to pour down boiling oil, or molten lead, upon any who should attempt the walls.

In the upper stories only, of this strong place, were there any windows, such as deserved the name, beyond mere loops and arrowslits; but there, far above the reach of any scaling-ladder, they looked out, tall and shapely, glimmering in the summer sunshine, in the rich and gorgeous hues of the stained glass—at that time the most recent and costly of foreign luxuries, opening on a projecting gallery, or bartizan, of curiously-carved stonework, which ran round all the four sides of the building, and rendered the dwelling apartments of the castellan and his family both lightsome and commodious. One of the tall turrets, which have been described, contained the winding staircase, which gave access to the halls and guard-rooms which occupied all the lower floors, and to the battlements above, while each of the others contained sleeping-chambers of narrow dimensions, on each story, opening into the larger apartments.

This keep, with the exception of the tall battlemented flanking walls, with their esplanades and turrets, and advanced barbican or gate-house, was the only genuine Norman portion of the castle, and occupied the very summit of the knoll; but below it, and for the most part concealed and covered by the ramparts on which it abutted, was a long, low, roomy stone building, which had been in old times the mansion of the Saxon thane, who had occupied the rich and fertile lands of that upland vale, in the happy days before the advent of the fierce and daring Normans, to whom he had lost both life and lands, and left an empty name alone to the inheritance, which was not to descend to any of his race or lineage.

Below the walls, which encircled the hillock about midway between the base and summit, except at one spot, where the

gate-house was thrust forward to the brink of a large and rapid brook, which had been made by artificial means completely to encircle the little hill, the slopes were entirely bare of trees or underwood, every thing that could possibly cover the advances of an enemy being carefully cut down or uprooted, and were clothed only by a dense carpet of short, thick greensward, broidered with daisies pied, and silver lady's smocks; but beyond the rivulet, covering all the bottom of the valley with rich and verdant shade, were pleasant orchards and coppices, among which peeped out the thatched roofs and mud walls of the little village, inhabited by the few free laborers, and the more numerous thralls and land-serfs, who cultivated the demesnes of the foreign noble, who possessed them by right of the sword.

Through this pleasant little hamlet, the yellow road, which led up to the castle, wound devious, passing in its course by an open green, on which half a dozen sheep and two or three asses were feeding on the short herbage, with a small Saxon chapel, distinguished by its low, round, wolf-toothed arch and belfry, on the farther side; and, in singular proximity to the sacred edifice, a small space, inclosed by a palisade, containing a gallows, a whipping-post, and a pair of stocks—sad monuments of Saxon slavery, and Norman tyranny and wrong.

In one of the upper chambers of the feudal keep, a small square room, with a vaulted roof, springing from four clustered columns in the corners, with four groined ribs, meeting in the middle, from which descended a long, curiously-carved pendant of stone, terminating in a gilt iron candelabrum of several branches, two men were seated at a board, on which, though the solid viands of the mid-day meal had been removed, there

were displayed several silver dishes, with wastel bread, dried fruits, and light confections, as well as two or three tall, graceful flasks of the light fragrant wines of Gascony and Anjou, and several cups and tankards of richly-chased and gilded metal, intermixed with several large-bowled and thin-stemmed goblets of purple and ruby-colored glass.

The room was a very pleasant one, lighted by two tall windows, on two different sides, which stood wide open, admitting the soft, balmy, summer air, and the fresh smell of the neighboring greenwoods, the breezy voice of which came gently in, whispering through the casement. The walls were hung with tapestries of embossed and gilded Spanish leather, adorned with spirited figures of Arab skirmishers and Christian chivalry, engaged in the stirring game of warfare; while, no unfit decoration for a wall so covered, two or three fine suits of chain and plate armor, burnished so brightly that they shone like silver, with their emblazoned shields and appropriate weapons, stood, like armed knights on constant duty, in canopied niches, framed especially to receive them.

Varlets, pages, and attendants, had all withdrawn; and the two Norman barons sat alone, sipping their wine in silence, and apparently reflecting on some subject which they found it difficult to approach without offense or embarrassment. At last, the younger of the two, Sir Philip de Morville, after drawing his open hand across his fair, broad forehead, as if he would have swept away some cloud which gloomed over his mind, and drinking off a deep goblet of wine, opened the conversation with evident confusion and reluctance.

"Well, well," he said, "it must out, Sir Yvo, and though it is not very grateful to speak of such things, I must needs do

so, lest I appear to you uncourtly and ungracious, in hesitating to do to you, mine own most tried and trusty friend, to whom I owe no less than my own life, so small a favor as the granting liberty to one poor devil of a Saxon. I told you I would do it, if I might; yet, by my father's soul, I know not how to do it!"

"Where is the rub, my friend?" replied the other, kindly. "I doubt not, if we put both our heads together, we can accomplish even a greater thing than making a free English yeoman of a Saxon thrall."

"I never was rich, as you well know, De Taillebois; but at the time of the king's late incursion into Wales, when I was summoned to lead out my power, I had no choice but to mortgage this my fortalice, with its demesne of Waltheofstow, and all its plenishing and stock, castle and thralls, and crops and fisheries, to Abraham of Tadcaster, for nineteen thousand zecchins, to buy their outfitting, horses, and armor; and this prohibits me from manumitting this man, Kenric, although I would do so right willingly, not for that it would pleasure you only, but that he is a faithful and an honest fellow for a thrall, and right handy, both with arbalast and longbow. I know not well how to accomplish it."

"Easily, easily, Philip," answered Sir Yvo, laughing. "Never shall it be said that nineteen thousand zecchins stood between Yvo de Taillebois and his gratitude; besides, this will shoot double game with a single arrow. It will relieve our trusty Kenric from the actual bondage of a corporeal lord and master, and liberate my right good friend and brother in arms, Philip de Morville, from the more galling spiritual bondage of that foul tyrant and perilous oppressor,

debt. Tush! no denial, I say," he continued, perceiving that Sir Philip was about to make some demur; "it is a mere trifle, this, and a matter of no moment. I am, as you well know, passing rich, what with my rents in Westmoreland, and my estates beyond the sea. I have even now well-nigh twice the sum that you name, lying idle in my bailiff's hands at Kendall, until I may find lands to purchase. It was my intent to have bought those border lands of Clifford's, that march with my moorlands on Hawkshead, but it seems he will not sell, and I am doubly glad that it gives me the occasion to serve you. I will direct my bailiff at once to take horse for Tadcaster and redeem your mortgage, and you can take your own time and pleasure to repay it. There is no risk, Heaven knows, for Waltheofstow is well worth nineteen thousand zecchins three times told, and, in lieu of usance money, you shall transfer the man Kenric from thee and thine to me and mine, forever. So shall my gratitude be preserved intact, and my pretty Guendolen have her fond fancy gratified."

"Be it so, then, in God's name; and by my faith I thank you for the loan right heartily; for, on mine honor! that same blood-sucker of Israel hath pumped me like the veriest horse-leech, these last twelve months, and I know not but I should have had to sell, after all. We must have Kenric's consent, however, that all may be in form; for he is no common thrall, but a serf of the soil, and may not be removed from it, nor manumitted even, save with his own free will."

"Who ever heard of a serf refusing to be free, more than of a Jew not loving ducats? My life on it, he will not be slow to consent!"

"I trow not, I trow not, De Taillebois, but let us set about

it presently; a good deed can not well be done too quickly. You pass the wine cup, too, I notice. Let us take cap and cloak, and stroll down into the hamlet yonder; it is a pleasant ramble in the cool afternoon, and we can see him in his den; he will be scant of wind, I trow, and little fit to climb the castle hill this evensong, after the battering he received from that stout forester. But freedom will be a royal salve, I warrant me, for his worst bruises. Shall we go?"

"Willingly, willingly. I would have it to tell Guendolen at her wakening. 'T will be a cure to her also. She is a tender-hearted child ever, and was so from her cradle. Why, I have known her cry like the lady Niobe, that the prior of St. Albans told us of—who wept till she was changed into a dripping fountain, when blessed St. Michael and St. George slew all her tribe of children, for that she likened herself, in her vain pride of beauty, to the most holy virgin mother, St. Mary of Sienna—at the killing of a deer by a stray shaft, that had a suckling fawn beside her foot; and when I caused them to imprison Wufgitha, that was her nurse's daughter, for selling of a hundred pounds of flax that was given her to spin, she took sick, and kept to her bed two days and more, all for that she fancied the wench would pine; though her prison-house was the airiest and most lightsome turret chamber in my house at Kendal, and she was not in gyves nor on prison diet. Faith! I had no peace with her, till I gave the whole guidance of the women into her hands. They are all ladies since that day at Kendal, or next akin to it."

"Over god's forbode!" answered Philip, laughing. "It must have been a black day for your seneschal. How rules he your warders, since? My fellow, Hundibert, swears that the

girls need more watching than the laziest swine in the whole Saxon herd. But come; let us be moving."

With that they descended the winding stone stairway into the great hall or guard-room, which occupied the whole of one floor of the castle—a noble vaulted room, stone-arched and stone-paved, its walls hung with splendid arms and well-used weapons,

"Old swords, and pikes, and bows,
And good old shields, and targets, that had borne some stout old blows."

Thence, through an echoing archway, above which in its grooves of stone hung the steel-clinched portcullis, and down a steep and almost precipitous flight of steps, without any rail or breastwork, they reached the large court-yard, where some of the retainers were engaged in trying feats of strength and skill, throwing the hammer, wrestling, or shooting with arbalasts at a mark, while others were playing at games of chance in a cool shadowy angle of the walls, moistening their occupation with an occasional pull at a deep, black tankard, which stood beside them on the board.

After tarrying a few minutes in the court, observing the wrestlers and cross-bowmen, and throwing in an occasional word of good-humored encouragement at any good shot or happy fall, the lords passed the drawbridge, which was lowered, giving access to the pleasant country, over which the warder was gazing half-wistfully, and watching a group of pretty girls, who were washing clothes in the brook at about half a mile's distance, laughing as merrily and singing as tunefully as though they had been free maidens of gentle Norman lineage, instead of contemned and outlawed Saxons,

the children, and the wives and mothers of slaves and bondmen in the to be hereafter.

"Hollo! old Stephen," cried the Knight of Morville, gayly, as he passed the stout dependant; "I thought thou wert too resolute a bachelor to cast a sheep's-eye on the lasses, and too thorough-paced a Norman to let the prettiest Saxon of them all find favor in your sight."

"I don't know, sir; I don't know that," answered the man, with a grin, half-bashfully, and between bantering and earnest. "There 's little Edith down yonder; and, bond or free, there 's not a girl about the castle, or within ten miles of it, for that matter, that has got an eye to come near those blue sparklers of her's; and as for her voice, when she 's singing, it would wile the birds out of heaven, let alone the wits of a poor soldier's brain-pan. Hark to her now, Sir Philip. Sang ever nightingale so sweetly as yon trill, Sir Knight?"

"Win her, Stephen. Win her, I 'll grant you my permission, for your paramour; and if you do, I 'll give her to you for your own. I owe you a boon of some sort, for that service you did me when you knocked that Welch churl on the head, who would have driven his long knife into my ribs, that time I was dismounted in the pass near Dunmailraise. Win her, therefore, if you may, Stephen, and yours she shall be, as surely and as steadfastly as though she were the captive of your spear."

"Small chance, Sir Philip," replied the man, slowly; "all thanks to you, natheless. But she 's troth-plighted to that tall, well-made fellow, Kenric, they say, that saved the lady Guendolen from the stag this morning. They 'll be asking your consent to the wedding and the bedding, one of these

days, Beausire. To-morrow, as like as not, seeing this feat of the good youth's will furnish forth a sort of plea for the asking of a favor."

"That will not much concern you, warder," said Sir Yvo. "Your rival will be out of your way shortly. I have asked his freedom but now of Sir Philip, and shall have him away with me the next week, to the North country."

"I don't know that will do me much good. They say she loves him parlously, and he her; and she ever looks coldly on me."

"A little perseverance is a certain remedy for cold looks, Stephen. So, don't be down-hearted. You will have a clear field soon."

"I am not so sure of that, sir. I should not wonder if he refused to go."

"Refused to go—to be free—to be his own master, and a thrall and slave no longer!"

"Who can tell, sir?" answered the man. "Saxon or Norman, bond or free, we 're all men, after all; and women have made fools of us all, since the days of Sir Adam in Paradise, and will, I fancy, to the end of all time. I 'd do and suffer a good deal myself to win such a look out of Edith's blue eyes, as I saw her give yon Saxon churl, when he came to after we had thrown cold water on him. And, after all, if Sir Hercules, of Greece, made a slave of himself, and a she-slave, too, as that wandering minstrel sang to us in the hall the other day, all to win the love of the beautiful Sultana, Omphale, I don't see, for myself, why a Saxon serf, that 's been a serf all his life, and got pretty well used to it by this time, should n't stay a serf all the rest of it, to keep the love

of Edith, who is prettier a precious sight than the fair Turk, Omphale, I'll warrant. I don't know but what I would myself."

"Pshaw! Stephen; that smacks Norman—smacks of the *gai science*, chivalry, sentiment, and fine high romance. You'll never see a Saxon sing 'all for love,' I'll warrant you."

"Well, sir, well. We shall see. A Saxon's a man, as I said before; and a Saxon in love is a man in love; and a man in love is n't a man in his senses any more than Sir Hercules of Greece was, and when a Saxon's in love, and out of his senses, there's no saying what he'll do; only one may guess it will be nothing over wise. And so, as I said before, I should not wonder if Kenric should not part with collar, thong, and shackles, if he must needs part too with little Edith the Fair. I would not, any wise, if I were he, Beausire."

CHAPTER V.

THE SERF'S QUARTER.

"As they sat in Englyshe wood,
Under the greenwode tree,
They thought they heard a woman wepe,
But her they mought not see."

ADAM BELL, ETC.

LEAVING the warder lounging listlessly at his post, as in a well-settled district and in "piping times of peace," with no feudal enemies at hand, and no outlaws in the vicinity, none at least so numerous as to render any guard necessary, except as a matter of dignity and decorum, the two knights strolled down the sandy lane toward the village, or quarter of the serfs; who were not admitted generally to reside within the walls, partly as a precaution, lest, in case of some national affray, they might so far outnumber the Norman men-at-arms as to become dangerous, partly because they were not deemed fitting associates for the meanest of the feudal servitors.

The two gentlemen in question were excellent specimens of the Norman baron of the day, without, however, being heroes or geniuses, or in any particular—except perhaps for good temper and the lack of especial temptation toward evil—manifestly superior to others of their class, caste, and period. Neither of them was in any respect a tyrant, individually

cruel, or intentionally an oppressor; but both were, as every one of us is at this day, used to look at things as we find them, through our own glasses, and to seek rather for what is the custom, than for what is right, and therefore ought to be; for what it suits us, and is permitted to us by law to do to others, than for what we should desire others to do unto us.

Reckless of life themselves, brought up from their cradles to regard pain as a thing below consideration, and death as a thing to be risked daily, they were not like to pay much regard to the mere physical sufferings of others, or to set human life at a value, such as to render it worth the preserving, when great stakes were to be won or lost on its hazard. Accustomed to set their own lives on the die, for the most fantastic whim of honor, or at the first call of their feudal suzerains, accustomed to see their Norman vassals fall under shield, and deem such death honorable and joyous, at their own slightest bidding, how should they have thought much of the life, far more of the physical or mental sufferings, of the Saxon serf, whom they had found, on their arrival in their newly-conquered England, a thing debased below the value, in current coin, of an ox, a dog, or a war-horse—a thing, the taking of whose life was compensated by a trivial fine, and whom they naturally came to regard as a dull, soulless, inanimate, stupid senseless animal, with the passions only, but without the intellect of the man. Of the two barons, Sir Yvo de Taillebois was the superior, both in intellect and culture; he was in easy circumstances also, while his far younger friend, Sir Philip de Morville, was embarrassed by the *res angusta domi*, and by the importunity of relentless creditors, which often drives men to do, as well as to suffer, extremes.

It was no hardness of nature or cruelty of disposition, therefore, which led either of these noble men—for they were noble, not in birth only, but in sentiment and soul, according to the notions of their age, which were necessarily *their* notions, and to the lights vouchsafed to them—to speak concerning the Saxon serfs, and act toward them, ever as if they were beasts of burden, worthy of care, kindness, and some degree of physical consideration, rather than like men, as themselves, endowed with hearts to feel and souls to comprehend. Had they been other than they were, they had been monsters; as it was, they were excellent men, as men went then, and go now, fully up to the spirit of their own times, and to the strain of morality and justice understood thereby, but not one whit above it. Therefore, Sir Yvo de Taillebois, finding himself indebted for his daughter's life to the hardihood and courage of the Saxon serf, whom he regarded much as he would have done his charger or his hound, desired, as a point of honor, rather than of gratitude, to secure to the serf an indemnity from toil, punishment, or want, during the rest of his life, just as he would have assigned a stall, with free rack and manger, to the superannuated charger which had saved his own life in battle; or given the run of kitchen, buttery, and hall, to the hound which had run the foremost of his pack. The sensibilities of the Saxon were as incomprehensible to him as those of the charger or the staghound, and he thought no more of considering him in his social or family relations, than the animals to which, in some sort, he likened him.

He would not, it is true, if asked as a philosophical truth, whether the life of a Saxon serf and of an Andalusian charg-

er were equivalent, have replied in the affirmative; for he was, according to his lights, a Christian, and knew that a Saxon had a soul to be saved; nor would he have answered, that the colt of the high-bred mare, or the whelp of the generous brach, stood exactly in the same relation as the child of the serf to its human parent; but use had much deadened his perceptions to the distinction; and the impassive and stolid insensibility of the Saxon race, imbruted and degraded by ages of serfdom, caused him to overlook the faint and rarely seen displays of human sensibilities, which would have led him less to undervalue the sense and sentiment of his helpless fellow-countrymen. As it was, he would as soon have expected his favorite charger or best brood mare to pine hopelessly, and grieve as one who could not be consoled, at being liberated from spur and saddle, and turned out to graze at liberty forever in a free and fertile pasture, while its colts should remain in life-long bondage, as he would have supposed it possible for the Saxon serf to be affected beyond consolation by the death, the deportation, or the disasters of his family.

Nor, again, did he regard liberty or servitude in an abstract sense, apart from ideas of incarceration, torture, or extreme privation, as great and inherent right or wrong.

The serf owed him absolute service; the free laborer, or villeyn, service, in some sort, less absolute; his vassals, man-service, according to their degree, either in the field of daily labor, the hunting-field, or the battle-field; he himself owed service to his suzerain; his suzerain to the King. It was all service, and the difference was but in the degree; and if the service of the serf was degraded, it was a usual, a habitual degradation, to which, it might be presumed, he was so well ac-

customed, that he felt it not more than the charger his demi-pique, or the hawk his bells and jesses; and, for the most part, he did not feel it more, nor regret it, nor know the lack of liberty, save as connected with the absence of the fetters or the lash.

And this, indeed, is the great real evil of slavery, wheresoever and under whatsoever form it exists, that it is not more, but less, hurtful to the slave than to the master, and that its ill effects are in a much higher and more painful degree intellectual than physical; that, while it degrades and lowers the inferiors almost to the level of mere brutes, through the consciousness of degradation, the absence of all hope to rise in the scale of manhood, and the lack of every stimulus to ambition or exertion, it hardens the heart, and deadens the sensibilities of the master, and renders him, through the strange power of circumstance and custom, blind to the existence of wrongs, sufferings, and sorrows, at the mere narration of which, under a different phase of things, his blood would boil with indignation.

Such, then, was in some considerable degree, the state of mind, arising from habit and acquaintance with the constitution of freedom and slavery, intermingled every where in the then world, any thing to the contrary of which they had never seen nor even heard of, in which the two Norman lords took their way down the village street, if it could be so called, being a mere sandy tract, passable only to horsemen, or carts and vehicles of the very rudest construction, unarmed, except with their heavy swords, and wholly unattended, on an errand, as they intended, of liberality and mercy.

The quarter of the serfs of Sir Philip de Morville was, for the most part, very superior to the miserable collection of

huts, liker to dog-houses than to any human habitation, which generally constituted the dwellings of this forlorn and miserable race; for the knight was, as it has been stated, an even-tempered and good-natured, though common-place man; and being endowed with rather an uncommon regard for order and taste for the picturesque, he consequently looked more than usual to the comfort of his serfs, both in allotting them small plots of garden-ground and orchards, and in bestowing on them building materials of superior quality and appearance.

All the huts, therefore, rudely framed of oak beams, having the interstices filled in with a cement of clay and ruddle, with thatched roofs and wooden lattices instead of windows, were whole, and for the most part weather-proof. Many of the inhabitants had made porches, covered with natural wild runners, as the woodbine and sweet-brier; all had made gardens in front, which they might cultivate in their hours of leisure, when the day's task-work should be done, and which displayed evidently enough, by their orderly or slovenly culture, the character and disposition of their occupants.

The few men whom the lords met on their way, mostly driving up beasts laden with fire-wood or forage to the cattle, for the day was not yet far spent, nor the hours devoted to toil well-nigh passed, were hale, strong, sturdy varlets, in good physical condition, strong-limbed, and giving plentiful evidences in their appearance of ample coarse subsistence; they were well-dressed, moreover, although in the plainest and coarsest habiliments, made, for the most part, of the tanned hides of beasts with the hair outward, or in some cases of cheap buff leather, their feet protected by clumsy home-made

sandals, and their heads uncovered, save by the thick and matted elf-locks of their unkempt and dingy hair.

They louted low as their lord passed them by, but no gleam of recognition, much less any smile of respectful greeting, such as passes between the honored superior and the valued servant, played over their stolid and heavy countenance, begrimed for the most part with filth, and half-covered with disordered beards and unshorn mustaches.

Neither in form, motion, nor attire, did they show any symptom of misusage; there were no scars, as of the stripes, the stocks, or the fetters, on their bare arms and legs; they were in good physical condition, well-fed, warmly-lodged, sufficiently-clad—perhaps in the best possible condition for the endurance of continuous labor, and the performance of works requiring strength and patience, rather than agility or energetic exertion.

But so also were the mules, oxen, or horses, which they were employed in driving, and which, in all these respects, were fully equal to their drivers, while they had this manifest advantage over them, that they were rubbed down and curry-combed, and cleaned, and showed their hides glossy and sleek, and their manes free from scurf and burrs, which is far more than could be stated of their human companions, who looked for the most part as if their tanned and swart complexions were as innocent of water as were their beards and elf-locks of brush or currycomb.

In addition, however, to their grim and sordid aspect, and their evident ignorance, or carelessness, of their base appearance, there was a dull, sullen, dogged expression on all their faces—a look not despairing, nor even sorrowful, but perfectly

impassive, as if they had nothing to hope for, or regret, or fear; the look of a caged bear, wearied and fattened out of his fierceness, not tamed, civilized, or controlled by any human teaching.

The stature and bearing, even of the freeborn and noble Saxon, in the day when his fair isle of Albion was his own, and he trod the soil its proud proprietor, had never been remarkable for its beauty, grace, or dignity. He was, for the most part, short, thick-set, sturdy-limbed, bull-necked, bullet-headed; a man framed more for hardihood, endurance, obstinate resolve, indomitable patience to resist, than for vivid energy, brilliant impulsive vigor, or ardor, whether intellectual or physical; but these men, though they neither lounged nor lagged behind, plodded along with a heavy, listless gait, their frowning brows turned earthward, their dull gray eyes rolling beneath their light lashes, meaningless and spiritless, and the same scowl on every gloomy face.

The younger women, a few of whom were seen about the doors or gardens, busied in churning butter, making cheese, or performing other duties of the farm and dairy, were somewhat more neatly, and, in some few cases, even tastefully attired. Some were of rare beauty, with a profusion of auburn, light brown, or flaxen hair, bright rosy complexions, large blue eyes, and voluptuous figures; and these bore certainly a more cheerful aspect, as the nature of woman is more hopeful than that of man, and a more gentle mood than their fellows; yet there were no songs enlivening their moments of rest or alleviating their hours of toil—no jests, no romping, as we are wont to see among young girls of tender years, occupied in the lighter and more feminine occupations of agricultural life.

Some one or two of these, indeed, smiled as they courtesied to their lord, but the smile was wan and somewhat sickly, nor seemed to come from the heart; it gave no pleasure, one would say, to her who gave—no pleasure to him who received it.

The little children, however, who tumbled about in the dust, or built mud-houses by the puddles in the road, were the saddest sight of all. Half-naked, sturdy-limbed, filthy little savages, utterly untaught and untamed, scarcely capable of making themselves understood, even in their own rude dialect; wild-eyed, and fierce or sullen-looking as it might, subject to no control or correction, receiving no education, no culture whatsoever—not so much even as the colt, which is broken at least to the menage, or the hound-puppy, which is entered at the quarry which he is to chase; ignorant of every moral or divine truth—ignorant even that each one of them was the possessor of a mortal body, far more of an immortal soul!

But not a thought of these things ever crossed the mind of the stately and puissant Normans. No impression such as these, which must needs now strike home to the soul of every chance beholder, had ever been made on their imaginations, by the sight of things, which, seeing every day, they had come to consider only as things which were customary, and were, therefore, right and proper—not the exception even to the rule, but the rule without exception.

So differently, indeed, did the circumstances above related strike Sir Yvo de Taillebois, that he even complimented his friend on the general comfort of his villenage, and the admirable condition of his people, the air of capacity of his men, and the beauty of his women; nay! he commented even upon

the plump forms and brawny muscles of the young savages, who fled diverse from before their footsteps, shrieking and terrified at the lordly port and resounding strides of their masters, as indicative of their future strength, and probable size and stature.

And Philip replied, laughing, "Ay! ay! they are a stout and burly set of knaves and good workers on the main. The hinges of the stocks are rusted hard for want of use, and the whipping-post has not heard the crack of the boar's hide these two years or better; but then I work them lightly and feed them roundly, and I find that they do me the more work for it, and the better; besides, the food they consume is all of their own producing, and I have no use for it. They raise me twice as much now as I can expend, on this manor. Now I work my folk but ten hours to the day, and give them meat, milk, and cheese, daily, and have not flogged a man since Martinmas two twelvemonths; and I have thrice the profit of them that my friend and neighbor, Reginald Maltravers, has, though his thralls toil from matin to curfew, with three lenten days to the week, and the thong ever sounding. It is bad policy, I say, to over-do the work or under-do the feeding. Besides, poor devils, they have not much fun in life, and if you fill their bellies, you fill them with all the pleasure and contentment they are capable of knowing. But, hold! here is Kenric's home—the best cabin in the quarter, as the owner is the best man. Let us go in."

"And carry him a welcome cure for his aching bones," said Sir Yvo, as they entered the little gate of a pretty garden, which stretched from the door down to a reach of the winding stream, overshadowed by several large and handsome willows. "By my faith! he must needs be a good man,"

resumed the speaker—"why, it is as neat as a thane's manor, and neater, too, than many I have seen."

But as he spoke, the shrill and doleful wail of women came from the porch of the house. "Ah, well-a-day! ah, well-a-day! that I should live to see it. Soul of my soul, Kenric, my first-born and my best one—thou first borne in, almost a corpse; and then, my darling and delight—my fair-haired Edgar's son dead of this doleful fever. Ah, well-a-day! ah, well-a-day! Would God that I were dead also, most miserable that I am, of women!"

And then the manly voice of Kenric replied, but faint for his wounds and wavering for the loss of blood; "Wail not for me, mother," he said; "wail not for me, for I am strong yet, and like to live this many a day—until thy toils are ended, and then God do to me as seems him good. But, above all, I say to thee, wail not for Adhemar the white-haired. His weakness and his innocence are over, here on earth. He has never known the collar or the gyves—has never felt how bitter and how hard a thing it is to be the slave of the best earthly master! His dream—his fever-dream of life is over; he is free from yoke and chain; he has awoken out of human servitude, to be the slave of the everlasting God, whose strictest slavery is perfect liberty and perfect love.

But still the woman wailed—"Ah, well-a-day! ah, well-a-day! would God that I were dead, most miserable of mothers that I am!"

And the Norman barons stood unseen and silent, smitten into dumbness before the regal majesty of the slave's maternal sorrow, perhaps awakened to some dim vision of the truth, which never had dawned on them until that day, in the serf's quarter.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SAXON'S CONSTANCY.

"And I'll be true to thee, Mary,
As thou 'lt be true to me;
And I never will leave thee, never, Mary,
As slave man or as free;
For we're bound forever and ever, Mary,
Till death shall set us free—
Free from the chain of the flesh, Mary,
Free from the devil's chain—
Free from the collar and gyves, Mary,
And slavery's cursed pain;
And then, when we're free in heaven, Mary,
We 'll pray to be bound again."

OLD ENGLISH SONG.

It was with grave and somewhat downcast brows, and nothing of haughtiness or pride of port or demeanor, that the lord and his friend entered under the lowly roof, invested for the moment with a majesty which was not its own, by the strange sacredness of grief and death.

There never probably, in the whole history of the world, has been a race of men, which entertained in their own persons a more boundless contempt of death, or assigned less value to the mere quality of life, than the warlike Normans. Not a man of them, while in the heyday of life and manhood, would have hesitated for a moment in choosing a death under shield, a death of violence and anguish, winning re-

nown and conferring deathless honor, to the gentlest decay, the most peaceful dissolution. Not a man would have shed a tear, or shown a sign of sorrow, had he seen his favorite son, his most familiar friend, his noblest brother in arms, felled from his saddle in the mêlée, and trampled out of the very form of humanity beneath the hoofs of the charging cavalry. Not a man but would have ridden over a battle-field, gorged with carcasses and drunk with gore, without expressing a thought of terror, a sentiment beyond the victory, the glory, and the gain. But such is the sovereignty of death, in the silence and solitude of its natural gloom, stripped of the pomp and paraphernalia of funereal honors, and unadorned by the empty braveries of human praise and glory —such is the empire of humble, simple, overruling sorrow, that, as they entered the low-roofed, undecorated chamber, where lay the corpse of the neglected, despised serf—the being, while in life, scarce equal to the animals of the chase—with his nearest of kin, serfs likewise, abject, ignorant, down-trodden, and debased—in so far as man can debase God's creations—mourning in Christian sorrow over him, the nobles felt, for a moment, that their nobility was nothing in the presence of the awful dead; and that they, too, for all their pride of antique blood, for all their strength of limb and heaven-daring valor, for all their lands and lordships, must be brought down one day to the dust, like the poor slave, and go forth, as they entered this world, bearing nothing out, before one common Lord and Master, who must in the end sit in universal judgment.

Such meditations are not, perhaps, very common to the great, the powerful, and the fortunate of men, in any time or

place, so long as the light of this world shine about, and their ways are ways of pleasantness; but if rare always, and under all ordinary circumstances, with the chivalrous, high-hearted, and hot-headed knights of the twelfth century, they were assuredly of the rarest.

Yet now so powerfully did they come over the strong minds of the two grave nobles, that they paused a moment on the threshold before entering; and Yvo de Taillebois, who was the elder man, and of deeper thoughts and higher imagination than his friend, raised his plumed bonnet from his brow, and bowed his head in silence.

It was a strange and moving scene on which they looked. The room, which was the ordinary dwelling-place of the family, was rather a large, dark parallelogram, lighted only through the door and a couple of narrow latticed windows, which, if closed, would have admitted few half-intercepted rays, but which now stood wide open, to admit the fresh and balmy air, so that from one, at the western end of the cottage, a clear ruddy beam of the declining sun shot in a long pencil of light, bringing out certain objects in strong relief against the surrounding gloom.

The door, at which the two knights stood, chanced to be so placed under the shadow of one of the great trees which overhung the house, that there was little light for them to intercept. Hence, those who were within, occupied by their own sad and bitter thoughts, did not at first so much as observe their presence. Facing the entrance, a large fire-place, with great projecting jambs, inclosing on each side a long oaken settle, occupied one half the length of the room; and on one of these, propped up with some spare bedding and

clothing, lay the wounded man, Kenric, to whom the Baron de Taillebois owed his beloved child's life, half recumbent, pale from the loss of blood, yet chafing with annoyance, that he should be thus bedridden, when his strength might have been of avail to others, feebler and less able to exert themselves almost than he, bruised though he was, and gored from the rude encounter.

A little fire was burning low on the hearth, with a pot simmering over it—for, in their bitterest times of anguish and desolation, the very poor must bestir themselves, at least, to house service—and from the logs, which had fallen forward on the hearth, volumes of smoke were rolling up and hanging thick about the dingy rafters, and the few hams and flitches which, with strings of oat-cakes garnished the roof, its only ornament.

But, wholly unconscious of the ill-odored reek, though it streamed up close under his very eyes, and seeing nothing of the chevaliers, who were watching not six paces from him, Kenric lay helpless, straining his nerveless eyes toward the spot where the ruddy western sunlight fell, like a glory, on the pale, quiet features of the dead child, and on the cold, gray, impassive head of the aged mourner, aged far beyond the ordinary course of mortal life, who bent over the rude bier; and, strange contrast, on the sunny flaxen curls, and embrowned ruddy features of two or three younger children, clustered around the grandam's knee, silent through awe rather than sorrow, for they were too young as yet to know what death meant, or to comprehend what was that awful gloom which had fallen upon hearth and home.

Every thing in that humble and poor apartment was scru-

pulously clean and tidy; a white cloth was on the table, with two or three platters and porringers of coarse earthenware, as if the evening meal had been prepared when death had entered in, and interposed his awful veto—some implements of rustic husbandry, an ax or two, several specimens of the old English bill and Sheffield whittle; and one short javelin, with a heavy head, hung on the walls, with all the iron work brightly polished and in good order; fresh rushes were strewn on the floor, a broken pitcher, full of newly-gathered field-flowers, adorned the window-sill; and what was strange indeed at that age, and in such a place, two or three old, much tattered, dingy manuscripts graced a bare shelf above the chimney corner.

The aged woman had ceased from the wild outbreak of grief with which she had bewailed the first sign of death on the sick boy's faded brow, and was now rocking herself to and fro above the body, with a dull, monotonous murmur, half articulate, combining fragments of some old Saxon hymn with fondling epithets and words of unmeaning sorrow, while the tears slowly trickled down her wan cheeks, and fell into her lap unheeded. Kenric was silent, for he had no consolation to offer, even if consolation could have been availing, in that

> The first dark hour of nothingness,
> The last of danger and distress.

Such was the spectacle which met the eyes of those high-born men, who had come down from their high place into the lowly village, with the intention of bestowing happiness and awakening gratitude, and who now found themselves placed front to front with one far mightier than themselves, whose

presence left no room for joy, even with those the least used to such emotion.

It is, however, I fear, but too much the case even with the more refined and better nurtured classes of the present century, while they are compassionating the sorrows and even endeavoring to alleviate the miseries of their poorer and less-cultivated brethren, to undervalue the depth of their sensations, to fancy that the same events harrow not up their less vivid sensibilities, and inflict not on their coarser and less intellectual natures the same agonies, which they effect upon their own. But, although it may be true that, in the very poor, the necessity of immediate labor, of all-engrossing occupation, rendering thought and reflection on the past impossible, sooner removes from them the pressure of past grief, than from those who can afford to brood over it in indolent despair, and indulge in morbid and selfish woe, there can be no doubt that, in the early moments of a new bereavement, the agony is as acute to the dullest and heaviest as to the loftiest and most imaginative intellect. Since it is the heart itself, that is touched in the first instance; and, though in after hours imagination may assume its share, so that the most imaginative minds dwell longest on the bygone suffering, the heart is the same in the peasant as in the peer, and that of the wisest of the sons of men bleeds neither more nor less profusely than that of the rudest clown.

And so, perchance, in some sort it was now. For, after pausing and looking reverently on the sad picture, until it was evident that they were entirely overlooked, if not unseen, Sir Philip de Morville took a step or two forward into the cottage, his sounding tread at once calling all eyes toward his

person, in a sort of half-stupid mixture of alarm and astonishment.

For in those days, the steps of a Norman baron rarely descended to the serf's quarters, unless they were echoed by the clanking strides of armed subordinates, and too often followed by the clash of shackles or the sound of the hated scourge. Sir Philip was indeed, as it has been observed, an even-tempered and just master, as things went in those times; that is to say, he was neither personally cruel nor exacting of labor; nor was he niggardly in providing for his people; nor did he, when it came before his eyes, tolerate oppression, or permit useless severity on the part of subordinates, who were often worse tyrants and tormentors than the lords. Still, his kindliest mood amounted to little more than bare indifference; and he certainly knew and studied less concerning any thing beyond the mere physical wants and condition of his thralls and bondsmen, than he did of the nurture of his hawks or hounds.

All the inmates, therefore, looked up in wonder, not altogether unmixed with fear, as, certainly for the first time in his life, the castellan entered the humble tenement of the serf of the soil.

But all idea of fear passed away on the instant; for the knight's face was open and calm, though grave, and his voice was gentle, and even subdued, as he spoke.

"Soh!" he said, "what is this, Kenric, which causes us, in coming down to see if we might not heal up thy heart and cheer thy spirits by good tidings, to find worse sorrow, for which we looked not, nor can reverse it by any mortal doing. Who is the boy?"

"Pardon that I rise not, beausire, to reply to you," answered

the serf, "but this right leg of mine will not bear me; and when the hand of sickness hold us down, good will must make shift in lieu of good service. It is my nephew Adhemar, Sir Philip, the only son of my youngest brother Edgar, who was drowned a year since in the great flood of the Idle."

"In striving to rescue my old blind destrier Sir Roland, ah! I remember him; a stout and willing lad! But I knew not, or forgot, that he was thy brother. And so this is his son," he added, striding up to the side of the rude bier, and laying his broad hand upon his brow. "He is young," he said, musingly, "very young to die. But we must all die one day, Kenric; and who knows but it is best to die young?"

"At least, the ancient Greeks and Romans said so," interposed Yvo de Taillebois, speaking for the first time. "They have a proverb, that, whomsoever the gods love, dies young."

"I think it *is* best, beausire," answered the serf; "it is never cold in the grave, in the dreariest storms; nor sultry in the scorching August. And they are never hungry there, nor sorefooted, nor weary unto death. I think it *is* best to die young, before one has tasted overmuch sorrow here on earth to burden his heart and make him stubborn and malicious. It was this I was saying to old Bertha, as your noblenesses entered; but she has never held her head up since my brother, Edgar, died; he was her favorite, since she always held that he had most favor of our grandfather."

"She is very old?" said Sir Philip, half questioning, half musing. "She is very old?"

"Above ninety years, Sir Philip, I have heard Father Eadbald say, who died twenty years since, at the abbey, come next Michaelmas. It should have been he who married her.

Her mother was the last free woman of our race. We had three hydes of land, I've heard her tell, in those days, down by the banks of Idle, held of old Waltheof, who gave his name to this your noble castle. But they are all gone before us, and we must follow them when our day comes. And then, as I tell Bertha, we shall be free, all, if not equal; for the most virtuous must be *first* there, as Father Engelram tells us. May Mary and the saints be about us!"

"Come, Kenric," said De Morville, cheeringly, "thou talkest now more like to a gray brother, than to the stout woodman who struckest yon brave blow but a while since, and saved Sir Yvo's fair lady, Guendolen. Faith! it was bravely done, and well; and well shall come of it to you, believe me. It is to speak of that to thee that we came hither, but this boy's death hath put it from our minds. But, hark ye, boy! I will send down some wenches hither from the castle, with ale and mead for his lykewake, and linen for a shroud; and Father Engelram shall see to the church-service; and there shall be a double dole to the poor at the abbey; and I myself will pay ten marks, in masses for his soul. If he died a serf, he shall be buried as though he were a freeman, and a franklin's son; and all for thy sake, and for the good blow thou struckest but three hours agone."

Kenric's brow flushed high, whether it was with gratification, or gratitude, or from wounded pride; but he stuttered confusedly, as he attempted to thank his lord, and only found his tongue as he related to his grandmother, in his native language, the promises and goodly proffers of the castellan; and she, for a moment, spoke eagerly in reply, but then seemed to forget, and was silent. A word or two passed in French be-

tween the nobles, Yvo de Taillebois urging that the time was inopportune for speaking of the matter on which they had come down; for that it was not well to mingle great joys with great sorrows; but Sir Philip insisted, declaring that there was no so good way to cure a past grief, as by the news of a coming joy.

"So, hark you, Kenric," he said; "the cure we came to bring you for your bruised bones, and the guerdon for your gallant deed, in two words, is this—I may not, as you may have heard tell, liberate my serfs, under condition, but I may *sell;* and I have sold thee to mine ancient friend and brother in arms, Yvo de Taillebois."

"Not to hold in thrall," exclaimed Yvo de Taillebois, eagerly, as he saw the face of the wounded man flush fiery red, and then grow pale as ashes. "Not to hold in thrall, but to liberate; but to make thee as free as the birds of the wildest wing—a freeman; and, if thou wilt follow me, a freeholder on my lands beyond the lakes, in the fair shire of Westmoreland."

"I am a serf of the soil, Beausire de Morville, and I may not be sold from the soil, unless legally convicted of felony. I know no felony that I have done, Sir Philip."

"Felony, man!" exclaimed Sir Philip; "art thou mad? We would reward thee for thy good faith and valor. We would set thee free. Of course, thou canst not be sold, but with thine own consent. But thou hast only to consent, and be free as thy master."

"Sir Philip," replied the man, turning even paler than before, and trembling, as if he had a fit of palsy, "would I could rise to bless you, on my bended knee! May the great

God of all things bless you! but I can not consent—think me not ungrateful—but I can not be free!"

"Not free!" exclaimed both nobles in a breath; and Sir Yvo gazed on him wistfully, as if he but partially understood; but Philip de Morville turned on his heel, superciliously. "Come, Sir Yvo," he said; "it skills not wasting time, or breath, on these abjects. Why, by the light of heaven! had I been fettered in a dungeon, with a ton of iron at my heels, I had leaped head-high to know myself once more a freeman; and here this slave, By 'r lady! I can not brook to speak his name! can not consent, forsooth! can not consent to be free! Heaven's mercy! Let him rot a slave, then! unless, perchance, thou wouldst crave him for thy sake, and the Virgin Mother's sake, to take good counsel and be free. Out on it! out on it! I am sick to the soul at such baseness!"

And he left the cottage abruptly, in scorn and anger. But Sir Yvo de Taillebois stood still, gazing compassionately and inquiringly on the man, over whose face there had fallen a dark, gray, death-like shadow, as he lay with his teeth and hands clinched like vices.

"Can this be? I thought not that on earth there lived a man who might be free, and would not. Dost not love liberty, Kenric?"

"Ask the wild eagle in his place of pride! Ask the wild goat on Pennigant or Ingleborough's head; and when they come down to the cage and chain, believe, then, that I love it not. Freedom! freedom! To be free but five minutes, I would die fifty deaths of direst torture. And yet it can not be—it can not be! Peace, tempter, peace; you can not stir

my soul. Slave I was born, slave I must die, and only in the grave shall be a slave no longer. Leave me, beausire; but think me not ungrateful. I never looked to owe so much to living man, and least of all to living man of your proud race, as I owe you to-day. But leave me, noble sir; you can not aid us. So go your way, and leave us to our sorrow, and may the God of serfs and seigneurs be about you with his blessing."

"Passing strange! This is passing strange!" said De Taillebois, as he turned to go likewise; "I never saw a beast that would not leave his cage when the door was open."

"But I have!" answered Kenric; "when the beast's brood were within, and might not follow him. But I am *not* a beast, Sir Knight; but though a serf, a man—a Saxon, not a Norman, it is true; but a man, yet, *a man!* There may be collar on my neck, and gyves on wrist and ankle, but my soul wears no shackles. It is as free as thine, and shall stand face to face with thine, one day, before the judgment seat. I am a man, I say, Sir Yvo de Taillebois; there sits old Bertha, surnamed the Good, a serf herself, mother of serfs, and grandmother; there lies my serf-brother's boy, himself a serf no longer; there sprawl unconscious on the hearth his baby brethren, serfs from the cradle to the grave; and here comes," he added, in a deeper, sterner, lower tone, as the beautiful Saxon slave-girl entered, whom they had seen near the drawbridge, washing in the stream—"here comes—look upon her, noble knight and Norman!—here comes my plighted bride, my Edith the fair-haired! I am a man, Norman! Should I be man, or beast, if, leaving these in bondage, I were to fare forth hence, alone, into dishonored freedom?"

CHAPTER VII.

THE SLAVE GIRL'S SELF-DEVOTION.

"I say not nay, but that all day,
It is both writ and said,
That woman's faith is, as who sayeth,
All utterly decayed;
But nevertheless, right good witnesse
In this case might be laid,
That they love true and continue—
Recorde the Not-browne mayde;
Which, when her love came her to prove,
To her to make his mone,
Wolde have him part—for in her hart
She loved him but alone."

THE NOT-BROWNE MAYDE.

How true a thing is it of the human heart, and alas! how pitiful a thing, that use has such wondrous power over it, whether for good or for evil; but mostly—perhaps because such is its original nature—unto evil. Custom will harden the softest spirit to the ice-brook's temper, and blind the clearest philosophic eye to all discrimination, that things the most horrible to behold shall be beheld with pleasure, and things the most unjust regarded as simple justice, or, at least, as the inevitable course and pervading law of nature. True as this is, in all respects, in none is it more clearly or fatally discoverable than in every thing connected with what may be called slavery, in

the largest sense—including the subjugation, by whatever means, not only of man to man, but even of animals to the human race. In all such cases, it would appear that the hardening and deteriorating influence of habit, and perhaps the unavoidable tendency to believe every thing subordinate as in itself inferior, soon brings the mind to regard the power to enforce and the capacity to perform, as the rule of justice between the worker and the master.

The generally good and kind-hearted man, who has all his life been used to see his beasts of burden dragging a few pounds' weight above their proper and merciful load, soon comes to regard the extraordinary measure as the proper burden, and to look upon the hapless brute, which is pining away by inches, in imperceptible and insensible decay, as merely performing the work, and filling the station, to perform and fill which it was created. And so, and yet more fatally, as regards the subjugation of man, or a class of men, to man. We commence by degrading, and end by thinking of him as of one naturally degraded. We reduce him to the standard and condition of a brute, then assume that he is but a brute in feelings, intellect, capacity to acquire, and thence argue—in the narrowest of circles—that being but a brute, it is but right and natural to deal with him as what he is. Nor is this tendency of the human mind limited in its operation to actual slavery; but prevails, more or less, in relation to all servitude and inferiority, voluntary or involuntary; so that many of the best, all indeed but the very best, among us, come in the end to look upon all, placed by circumstances and society in inferior positions, as inferiors in very deed, and as naturally unequal to themselves in every capacity, even that

of enjoyment, and to regard them, in fact, as a subordinate class of animals and beings of a lower range of creation.

This again, still working in a circle, tends really to lower the inferior person; and, by the tendency of association, the inferior class; until degenerating still, as must occur, from sire to son, through centuries, the race itself sinks from social into natural degradation.

This had already occurred in a very great degree in the Saxon serfs of England, who had been slaves of Saxons, for many centuries, before the arrival of the Norman conquerors. The latter made but small distinction, in general, between the free-born and the slave of the conquered race, but reduced them all to one common state of misery and real or quasi servitude—for many, who had once been land-holders and masters, sunk into a state of want and suffering so pitiable and so abject, that, generation succeeding generation with neither the means nor the ambition to rise, they became almost undistinguishable from the original serfs, and in many instances either sold themselves into slavery to avoid actual starvation, or were seized and enslaved, in defiance of all law, in the dark and troublous time which followed the Norman conquest.

There being then two classes of serfs existing on British soil, though not recognized as different by law, or in any wise differing in condition, Kenric, himself descended in the third degree from a freeman and landholder, exhibited a fair specimen at the first; although it by no means followed of course that men in his relative position were actually superior to the progeny of those, who could designate no point before which their ancestors were free. And this became evident, at once, to those who looked at the characters of Kenric the Dark, and Rad-

wulf the Red, of whom the former was in all respects a man of sterling qualities, frank, bold demeanor, and all the finer characteristics of independent, hardy, English manhood; while the second, though his own brother, was a rude, sullen, thankless, spiritless, obstinate churl, with nothing of the man, except his sordid, sensual appetites, and every thing of the beast, except his tameless pride and indomitable freedom.

It was, therefore, even with one of the better class of these unfortunate men, a matter of personal character and temper, whether he retained something of the relative superiority he bore to his yet more unfortunate companions in slavery, or whether he sank self-lowered to their level. Nothing, it is true, had either to which he might aspire; no hope of bettering his condition; no chance of rising in the scale of humanity. Acts of emancipation, as rewards of personal service, had been rare even among the Saxons, since, the utmost personal service being due by the thrall to his lord, no act of personal service, unless in most extreme cases, could be esteemed a merit; and such serfs as owed their freedom to the voluntary commiseration of their owners, owed it, in the great majority of cases, to their superstition rather than to their mercy, and were liberated on the deathbed, when they could serve their masters in no otherwise, than in becoming an atonement for their sins, and smoothing their path through purgatory to paradise.

With the Normans, the chance of liberation was diminished an hundred-fold; for the degraded race, held in utter abhorrence and contempt, and looked upon as scarce superior to the abject Jew, was excluded from all personal contact with their haughty lords, who rarely so much as knew them by sight or

by name—was incapable of serving them directly, in the most menial capacity—and, therefore, could hardly, by the wildest good fortune, hope for a chance of attracting even observation, much less such praise as would be like to induce the high boon of liberty.

Again, on the deathbed, the Norman knight or noble, scarce condescending to think of his serf as a human being, could never have entertained so preposterous an idea, as that the better or worse usage, nay! even the life or death of hundreds of these despised wretches could weigh either for him or against him, before the throne of grace. So that the deathbed emancipations, which had been so frequent before the conquest, and which were recommended and inculcated by abbots and prelates, while abbots and prelates were of Saxon blood, as acts acceptable on high, now that the high clergy, like the high barons of the realm, were strangers to the children of the soil, had fallen into almost absolute disuse.

In fact, in the twelfth century, the Saxon serf-born man had little more chance of acquiring his freedom, than an English peasant of the present day has of becoming a temporal or spiritual peer of the realm; and, lacking all object for emulation or exertion, these men too often justified the total indifference with which they were looked upon by the owners of the soil. This fact, or rather this condition of things in their physical and moral aspect, has been dwelt upon, somewhat at length, in order to show how it is possible that a gentleman of the highest birth, of intellects, acquirements, ideas of justice and right, vastly more correct than those entertained by the majority of his caste—a gentleman, sensitive, courteous, kindly, the very mirror of faith and honor—should have dis-

torted devotion so noble, faith so disinterested, a sense of honor so high, a piety so pure, as that displayed by Kenric the Dark, in his refusal of the bright jewel liberty, in his eloquent assertion of his rights, his sympathies, his spiritual essence as a man, into an act of *outrecuidance*, almost into a personal affront to his own dignity. Yet, so it was, and alas! naturally so—for so little was he, or any of his fellows, used to consider his serf in the light of an arguing, thinking, responsible being, that probably Balaam was but little more astonished when his ass turned round on him and spoke, than was Yvo de Taillebois, when the serf of the soil stood up in his simple dignity as a man, and refused to be free, unless those he loved, whom it was his duty to support, cherish, shield, and comfort, might be free together with him. Certain it is, that he left the cottage which he had entered full of gratitude, and eager to be the bearer of good tidings, disappointed, exasperated against Kenric, vexed that his endeavors to prove his gratitude had been frustrated, and equally uncertain how he should disclose the unwelcome tidings to his daughter, and how reconcile to his host the conduct of the Saxon, which he had remained in the hope of fathoming, and explaining to his satisfaction.

In truth, he felt himself indignant and wounded at the unreasonable perduracy of the man, in refusing an inestimable boon, for what he chose to consider a cause so trivial; and this, too, though had he himself been in the donjon of the infidel, expecting momentary death by the faggot or the rack, and been offered liberty, life, empire, immortality, on condition of leaving the least-valued Christian woman to the harem of

the Mussulman, he would have spurned the offer with his most arrogant defiance.

This seemed to him much as it would seem to the butcher, if the bull, with the knife at his throat, were to speak up and refuse to live, unless his favorite heifer might be allowed to share his fortunes. It appeared to him wondrous, indeed, but wondrously annoying, and almost absurd. In no respect did it strike him as one of the noblest and most generous deeds of self-abandonment of which the human soul is capable; though, had the self-same offer been spurned, as the slave spurned it, and in the very words which he had found in the rude eloquence of indignation, by belted knight or crowned king, he had unhesitatingly styled it an action of the highest glory, and worthy of immortal record in herald's tale or minstrel's story. Such is the weight of circumstance upon the noblest minds of men.

With his brow bent, and his arms folded on his breast, moodily, almost sorrowfully, did the good knight of Taillebois wend his way back toward the towers of Waltheofstow, making no effort to overtake his brother-in-arms and entertainer, whom he could clearly see stalking along before him, in no more placable mood than himself, but burying himself on his return in his own chamber, whence he made his appearance no more that evening; though he might hear Sir Philip storming through the castle, till the vaulted halls and passages resounded from barbican to battlement.

Meantime, in the lowly cottage of the serf—for the lord, though angry and indignant, had not failed of his plighted word—the lykewake of the dead boy went on—for that was a Saxon no less than a Celtic custom, though celebrated by

the former with a sort of stolid decorum, as different as night is from day from the loud and barbarous orgies of their wilder neighbors.

The consecrated tapers blazed around the swathed and shrouded corpse, and sent long streams of light through the open door and lattices of the humble dwelling, as though it had been illuminated for a high rejoicing. The death hymn was chanted, and the masses sung by the gray brothers from the near Saxon cloister. The dole to the poor had been given largely, out of the lord's abundance; and the voices of the rioting slaves, emancipated from all servitude and sorrow, for the nonce, by the humming ale and strong metheglin, were loud in praises of their bounteous master, until, drenched and stupefied with liquor, and drunk with maudlin sorrow, they staggered off to their respective dens, to snore away the fumes of their unusual debauch, until aroused at dawn by the harsh cry of the task-master.

By degrees the quiet of the calm summer night sank down over the dwelling and garden of Kenric, as guest after guest departed, until no one remained save one old Saxon brother, who sat by the simple coffin, telling his beads in silence, or muttering masses for the soul of the dead, apparently unconscious of any thing passing around him.

The aged woman had been removed, half by persuasion, half by gentle force, from the dwelling-room, and had soon sunk into the heavy and lethargic slumber which oftentimes succeeds to overwhelming sorrow. The peaceful moonlight streamed in through the open door of the cheerless home, like the grace of heaven into a disturbed and sinful heart, as one by one the tapers flickered in their sockets and expired. The

shrill cry of the cricket, and the peculiar jarring note of the night-hawk, replaced the droning of the monkish chants, and the suppressed tumult of vulgar revelry; but, though there was solitude and silence without, there was neither peace nor heart-repose within.

Sorely shaken, and cruelly gored by the stag in trunk and limbs, and yet more sorely shaken in his mind by the agitation and excitement of the angry scene with his master, and by the internal conflict of natural selfishness with strong conscientious will, Kenric lay, with his eyes wide open, gazing on his dead nephew, although his mind was far away, with his head throbbing, and his every nerve jerking and tense with the hot fever.

But by his side, soothing his restless hand with her caressing touch, bathing his burning temples with cold lotions, holding the soft medicaments to his parched lips, beguiling his wild, wandering thoughts with gentle lover's chidings, and whispering of better days to come, sat the fair slave girl, Edith, his promised wife, for whose dear sake he had cast liberty to the four winds, and braved the deadly terrors of the unforgiving Norman frown.

She had heard enough, as she entered the house at that decisive moment, to comprehend the whole; and, if the proud and high-born knights were at a loss to understand, much less appreciate, the noble virtue of the serf, the poor uneducated slave girl had seen and felt it all—felt it thrill to her heart's core, and inspire her weakness with equal strength, equal devotion.

She had argued, she had prayed, she had implored, clinging to his knees, that for the love of Heaven, for the love of her-

self, he would accept the boon of freedom, and leave her to her fate, which would be sweeter far to her, she swore, from the knowledge of his prosperity, than it could be rendered by the fruition of the greatest worldly bliss. And then, when she found prayer and supplication fruitless, she, too, waxed strong and glorious. She lifted her hand to heaven, and swore before the blessed Virgin and her ever-living Son, that, would he yield to her entreaties and be free, she would be true to him, and to him alone, forever; but should he still persist in his wicked and mad refusal of God's own most especial gift of freedom, she would at least deprive him of the purpose of his impious resolution, place an impenetrable barrier between them two, and profess herself the bride of Heaven.

At length, as he only chafed and resisted more and more, till resistance and fever were working almost delirium—any thing but conviction and repentance—like a true woman, she betook herself from argument, and tears, and supplication, to comforting, consoling, and caressing; and, had the rage and fever of his body, or the terrible excitement of his tortured mind, been less powerful, she could not but have won the day, in the noblest of all strifes—the strife of mutual disinterestedness and devotion.

> "O woman! in our hours of ease,
> Inconstant, coy, and hard to please;
> When pain and anguish rend the brow,
> A ministering angel thou!"

CHAPTER VIII.

GUENDOLEN'S BOWER.

"Four gray walls, and four square towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers,
The Lady of Shalott."

TENNYSON.

HIGH up in the gray square tower, which constituted the keep of the castle of Waltheofstow, there was a suite of apartments, the remains of which are discoverable to this day, known as the Lady's Bower; which had, it is probable, from the construction of the edifice, been set apart, not only as the private chambers of the chatelaine and ladies of the family, her casual guests and their attendants, but as what we should now call the drawing-rooms, wherein the more social hours of those rude days were passed, when the sexes intermingled, whether for the enjoyment of domestic leisure, or for gayety and pleasure.

The keep of Waltheofstow consisted, as did indeed all the smaller fortalices of that date, when private dwellings, even of the great and powerful, were constructed with a view to defense above all beside, of one large massive building of an oblong square form, with a solid circular buttress at each angle, which, above the basement floor, was hollowed into a lozenge-shaped tur-

ret, extending above the esplanade of the highest battlements, and terminating at a giddy height in a crenellated and machicolated lookout, affording a shelter to the sentries, and a flanking defense to the *corps de logis.*

For its whole height, from the guard-room, which occupied the whole ground-floor, to the battlements, one of these turrets contained the great winding stone staircase of the castle, lighted at the base by mere shot-holes and loops, but, as it rose higher and higher above the danger of escalade, by mullioned windows of increasing magnitude, until, at the very summit, it was surmounted by a beautifully-wrought lanthorn of Gothic stone-work. The other three, lighted in the same manner, better and better as they ascended, formed each a series of small pleasant rooms, opening upon the several stories, and for the most part were fitted as the sleeping-rooms of the various officers.

The whole floor, first above the guard-room, was divided into the kitchen, butteries, and household offices; while the next in order, being the third in elevation above the court-yard, was reserved in one superb parallelogram of ninety feet by sixty, well lighted by narrow lanceolated windows, and adorned with armors of plate and mail, scutcheons rich with heraldic bearings, antlers of deer and elk, horns of the bull, yet surviving, of the great Caledonian forests, skulls of the grizzly boars grinning with their ivory tusks, and banners dependent from the lofty groinings of the arched roof, trophies of many a glorious day. This was the knight's hall, the grand banqueting-saloon of the keep; while of its three turrets, one was the castle chapel, a second a smaller dining-hall, and the last the private cabinet and armory of the castellan.

Above this, again, on the fourth plat, were bed-chambers of state, the larger armory, and the dormitories of the warders, esquires, pages, and seneschal, who alone dwelt within the keep, the rest of the garrison occupying the various out-buildings and towers upon the flanking walls and ramparts.

The fifth story, at least a hundred feet in air above the inner court, and nearly thrice that elevation above the base of the scarped mount on which the castle stood, contained the Lady's bower; and its whole area of ninety feet by sixty was divided, in the first instance, laterally by three partitions, into three apartments, each sixty feet in length by thirty wide. Of these, however, the first and last were subdivided equally in two squares of thirty feet. The whole of the bower, thus, contained a handsome ante-chamber, opening from the great staircase, with a large room for the waiting-women to the right, communicating with the turret chamber corresponding to the stairway. Beyond the vestibule, by which access was had to it, lay the grand ladies' hall, furnished with all the superabundance of splendor and magnificence, and all the lack of real convenience, which was the characteristic of the time; divans, and deep settles, and ponderous arm-chairs covered with gold and velvet; embroideries and emblazoned foot-cloths on the floor; mirrors of polished steel, emulating Venetian crystals, on the walls; mighty candelabra of silver gilt; tables of many kinds, some made for the convenience of long-forgotten games, some covered with cups and vessels of gold, silver, and richly-colored glass, and one or two, smaller, and set away in quiet nooks, with easy seats beside them, showing the feminine character of the occupants, by a lute, a gittern, and two or three other musical implements long since fallen into disuse;

pages of music written in the old musical notation of the age; some splendidly-bound and illuminated missals and romances, in priceless manuscript, each actually worth its weight in gold; silks and embroideries; a working-stand, with a gorgeous surcoat of arms half finished, the needle sticking in the superb material where the fairy fingers had left it, when last called from their gentle task; and great vases full of the finest flowers of the season.

Such was the aspect of the room, beheld by the declining rays of the sun, which had already sunk so low that his stray beams, instead of falling downward through the gorgeous hues of the tinted-windows, streamed upward into that lofty place, playing on the richly-carved and gilded ceilings, catching here on a mirror, there on a vase of gold or silver, and sending hundreds of burning specks of light dancing through the motley haze of gold and purple, which formed the atmosphere of that almost royal bower.

From this rich withdrawing-room, strangely out of place in appearance, though not so in reality, in the old gray Norman fortress, among the din of arms and flash of harness, opened two bed-rooms, equal in costliness of decoration to the saloon without, each having its massive four-post bedstead in a recess, accessible by three or four broad steps, as if it were a throne of honor, each with its mirror and toilet, its appurtenances for the bath, its easy couches, and its chair of state; its *prie dieu* and kneeling-hassock, in a niche, with a perfumed lamp burning before a rudely-painted picture of the Madonna, each having communication with a pretty turret-chamber, fitted with couch and reading-desk, and opening on a bartizan or balcony, which, though they were intended in times of war or danger for posts

of vantage to the defense, whence to shower missiles or pour seething pitch or oil on the heads of assailants, were filled in the pleasant days of peace with shrubs and flowers, planted in large tubs and troughs, waving green and joyous, and filling the air with sweet smells two hundred feet above their dewy birth-place.

It may be added, that so thick and massive were the walls at this almost inaccessible height, that galleries had been, as it were, scooped out of them, offering easy communication from one room to another, and even private staircases from story to story, with secret closets large enough for the accommodation of a favorite page or waiting-damsel, where nothing of the sort would be expected, or could indeed exist, within a modern dwelling.

Thus, the inconveniences of such an abode, all except the height to which it was necessary for the female inmates to climb, were more imaginary than real; and it was perfectly easy, and indeed usual, for the ladies of such a castle to pass to and fro from the rooms of their husbands, fathers, or brothers, and even from the knights' hall to their own bower, without meeting any of the retainers of the place, except what may be called the peaceful and familiar servants of the household.

Through the thick-vaulted roofs of stone, which rendered every story of the keep a separate fortress, no sound of arms, of revelry or riot, could ascend to the region of the ladies; and if their comforts were inferior to those of our modern beauties, their magnificence, their splendor of costume, of equipage, of followings, their power at home, and their influence abroad, where they shone as "Queens of Love and Beau-

ty," were held the arbiters of fame and dispensers of honor, where their smiles were held sufficient guerdon for all wildest feats of bravery, their tears expiable by blood only, their importance in the outer world of arms, of romance, of empire, were at the least as far superior; and it may be doubted, whether some, even the most spoiled of our modern fair ones, would not sigh to exchange, with the dames and demoiselles of the twelfth century, their own soft empire of the ball-room for the right to hold Courts of Love, as absolute unquestioned sovereigns, to preside at tilt and tournament, and send the noblest and the most superb of champions into mortal combat, or yet more desperate adventure, by the mere promise of a sleeve, a kerchief, or a glove.

She, however, who now occupied alone the Lady's Bower of Waltheofstow was none of your proud and court-hardened ladies, who could look with no emotion beyond a blush of gratified vanity on the blood of an admirer or a lover. Though for her, young as she was, steeds had been spurred to the shock, and her name shouted among the splintering of lances and the crash of mortal conflict, she was still but a simple, amiable, and joyous child, who knew more of the pleasant fields and waving woodlands of her fair lake-country, than of the tilt-yard, the court pageant, or the carousal, and who better loved to see the heather-blossom and the blue-bell dance in the free air of the breezy fells, than plumes and banners flaunt and flutter to the blare of trumpets.

The only child of Sir Yvo de Taillebois, a knight and noble of the unmixed Norman blood, a lineal descendant of one of those hardy barons who, landing with Duke William on his almost desperate emprise, had won "the bloody hand" at

Hastings, and gained rich lands in the northern counties during the protracted struggle which ensued, the Lady Guendolen had early lost her mother, a daughter of the noble house of Morville, and not a very distant relative of the good knight, Sir Philip, whose hospitality she was now partaking with her father.

To a girl, for the most part, the loss of a mother, before she has reached the years of discretion, is one never to be repaired, more especially where the surviving parent is so much occupied with duties, martial or civil, as to render his supervision of her bringing-up impossible. It is true that, in the age of which I write, the accomplishments possessed by the most delicate and refined of ladies were few and slight, as compared to those now so sedulously inculcated to our maidens, so regularly abandoned by our matrons; and that, at a period later by several centuries, he who has been styled, by an elegant writer,* the last of the Norman barons, great Warwick the Kingmaker, held it a boast that his daughters possessed no arts, no knowledge, more than to spin and to be chaste.

Yet even this small list of feminine attainments was far beyond the teaching of the illiterate and warlike barons, who knew nought of the pen, save when it winged the gray-goose shaft from the trusty yew, and whose appropriate and ordinary signatures were the impress of their sword-hilts on the parchments, which they did not so much as pretend to read; and, in truth, the Kingmaker's statement must either be regarded as an exaggeration, or the standard of female accomplishment had degenerated, as is not unlikely to have been actually the

* Sir E. Lytton Bulwer.

case, during the cruel and devastating wars of the Roses, which, how little soever they may have affected the moral, political, or agricultural condition of the English people at large, had unquestionably dealt a blow to the refinement, the courtesy, the mental culture, and personal polish of the English aristocracy, from which they began only to recover in the reigns of the later Tudors.

But in the case of the fair Guendolen, neither did the loss of her mother deprive her of the advantages of her birth, nor would the incapacity of her father, had the occasion been allowed him of superintending the culture of his child, have done so; for he was—at that day rarer in England than was a wolf, though literary culture had received some impulse from the present monarch, and his yet more accomplished father, Beauclerc—a man of intellectual ability, and not a little cultivation.

He had been largely employed by both princes on the continent, in diplomatic as well as military capacities; had visited Provence, the court of poetry and minstrelsy, and the *gai science;* had dwelt in the Norman courts of Italy, and even in Rome herself, then the seat of all the rising schools of literature, art, and science; and while acquiring, almost of necessity, the tongues of southern Europe, had both softened and enlarged his mind by not a few of their acquirements. Of this advantage, however, it was only of late years, when she was bursting into the fairest dawn of adolescence, that she had been permitted to profit; for, between her fifth and her fifteenth years, she had seen but little of her father, who, constantly employed, either as a statesman at home, an embas-[redacted]dor abroad, or a conquering invader of the wild Welsh

marches, or the wilder and more barbarous shores of Ireland, had rarely been permitted to call a day his own, much less to devote himself to those home duties and pleasures for which he was, beyond doubt, more than ordinarily qualified.

Yet, however unfortunate she might have been in this particular, she had been as happy in other respects, and had been brought up under circumstances which had produced no better consequences on her head than on her heart, on the graces of her mind and body, than on the formation of her feminine and gentle character.

CHAPTER IX.

GUENDOLEN.

"The sweetest lady of the time,—
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid."

ALFRED TENNYSON.

A SISTER of Guendolen's departed mother, Abbess of St. Hilda, a woman of unusual intellect, and judgment, character and feelings, in no degree inferior to her talents, had taken charge of her orphan niece immediately after the mother's death, and had brought her up, a flower literally untouched by the sun as by the storms of the world, in the serene and tranquil life of the cloister, when the cloister was indeed the seat of piety, and purity, and peace; in some cases the only refuge from the violence and savage lusts of those rugged days; never then the abode, at least in England, of morose bigotry or fierce fanaticism, but the home of quiet contemplation, of meek virtue, and peaceful cheerfulness.

The monasteries and priories of those days were not the sullen gaols of the soul, the hives of drones, or the schools of ignorance and bitter sectarian persecution which they have become in these latter days, nor were their inmates then immured as the tenants of the dungeon cell.

The abbey lands were ever the best tilled; the abbey

tenants ever the happiest, the best clad, the richest, and the freest of the peasantry of England. The monks, those of Saxon race especially, were the country curates of the twelfth century; it was they who fed the hungry, who medicined the sick, who consoled the sad at heart, who supported the widow and the fatherless, who supported the oppressed, and smoothed the passage through the dark portals to the dying Christian. There were no poor laws in those days, nor almshouses; the open gates and liberal doles of the old English abbeys bestowed unstinted and ungrudging charity on all who claimed it. The abbot on his soft-paced palfrey, or the prioress on her well-trained jennet, as they made their progresses through the green fields and humble hamlets of their dependants, were hailed ever with deferential joy and affectionate reverence; and the serf, who would lout sullenly before the haughty brow of his military chief, and scowl savagely with hand on the dudgeon hilt after he had ridden past, would run a mile to remove a fallen trunk from the path of the jolly prior, or three, to guide the jennet of the mild-eyed lady abbess through the difficult ford, or over the bad bit of the road, and think himself richly paid by a benediction.

In such a tranquil tenor had been passed the early years of the beautiful young Guendolen; and while she learned every accomplishment of the day—for in those days the nunneries were the schools of all that was delicate, and refined, and gentle, the schools of the softer arts, especially of music and illumination, as were the monasteries the shrines which alone kept alive the fire of science, and nursed the lamp of letters, undying through those dark and dreary ages—she learned also to be humble-minded, no less than holy-hearted,

to be compassionate, and kind, and sentient of others' sorrows; she learned, above all things, that meekness and modesty, and a gentle bearing toward the lowliest of her fellow-beings, were the choicest ornaments to a maiden of the loftiest birth.

Herself a Norman of the purest Norman strain, descended from those of whom, if not kings themselves, kings were descended, who claimed to be the peers of the monarchs to whom their own good swords gave royalty, she had never imbibed one idea of scorn for the conquered, the debased, the downfallen Saxon.

The kindest, the gentlest, the sagest, and at the same time the most refined and polished of all her preceptors, her spiritual pastor also, and confessor, was an old Saxon monk, originally from the convent of Burton on the Trent, who had migrated northward, and pitched the tent of his declining years in a hermitage situate in the glade of a deep Northumbrian wood, not far removed from the priory over which her aunt presided with so much dignity and grace.

He had been a pilgrim, a prisoner in the Holy Land, had visited the wild monasteries of Lebanon and Athos; he had seen the pyramids "piercing the deep Egyptian sky," had mused under the broken arches of the Coliseum, and listened, like the great historian of Rome, to the bare-footed friars chanting their hymns among the ruins of Jupiter Capitoline.

Like Ulysses, he had seen the lands, he had studied the manners, and learned to speak the tongues, of many men and nations; nor, while he had learned in the east strange mysteries of science, though he had solved the secrets of chemistry, and learned, long before the birth of "starry Galileo,"

to know the stars with their uprisings and their settings; though he knew the nature, the properties, the secret virtues, and the name of every floweret of the forest, of every ore of the swart mine, he had not neglected the gentler culture, which wreathes so graciously the wrinkled brow of wisdom. Not a poet himself, so far as the weaving the mysterious chains of rhythm, he was a genuine poet of the heart. Not a blush, not a smile, not a tear, not a frown on the lovely face of nature, but awakened a response in his large and sympathetic soul; not an emotion of the human heart, from the best to the basest, but struck within him some chord of deep and hidden feeling; to read an act of self-devoted courage, of charity, of generosity, of self-denial, would make his flesh quiver, his hair rise, his cheek burn. To hear of great deeds would stir him as with the blast of a war trumpet. He was one, in fact, of those gifted beings who could discern

> "Music in running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in every thing;"

and as he felt himself, so had he taught her to feel; and of what he knew himself, much he had taught her to know likewise.

Seeing, hearing, knowing him to be what he was, and, as is the wont ever with young and ingenuous minds, imagining him to be something far wiser, greater, and better than he really was, she was content at first, while other men were yet unknown to her, to hold him something almost supernaturally, ineffably beneficent and wise; and this incomparable being she knew also to be a Saxon. She saw her aunt, who, gentle as she was, and gracious, had yet a touch of the old Norse pride

of blood, untutored by the teachings of religion, and untamed by the discipline of the church, bow submissively to his advice, defer respectfully to his opinion, hang persuaded on his eloquence—and yet he was a Saxon.

When she burst from girlhood into womanhood—when her father, returned from the honors and the toils of foreign service, introduced her into the grand scenes of gorgeous chivalry and royal courtesy, preparatory to placing her at the head of his house—though she mingled with the paladins and peers of Normandy and Norman England, she saw not one who could compare in wisdom, in eloquence, in all that is highest and most heaven-reaching in the human mind, with the old Saxon, Father Basil.

How then could she look upon the race from which he sprang as inferior—as low and degraded by the hand of nature—when not the sagest statesman, the most royal prince, the proudest chevalier, the gentlest troubadour, could vie with him in one point of intellect or of refinement—with him, the Saxon priest, son himself, as he himself had told her, of a Saxon serf.

These were the antecedents, this the character of the beautiful girl, who, on the morning following her adventure in the forest, lay, supported by a pile of cushions, on one of the broad couches in the Lady's Bower of Waltheofstow, inhaling the fresh perfumed breath of the western air, as it swept in, over the shrubs and flowers in the bartizan, through the window of the turret chamber. She was beautiful as ever, but very pale, and still suffering, as it would seem, from the effects of her fall and the injuries she had received in the struggle with [redacted] terrible wild beast; for, whenever she attempted to move

or to turn her body, an expression of pain passed for a moment across the pure, fair face, and once a slight murmur escaped from her closed lips.

One or two waiting-maids, of Norman race, attended by the side of her couch, one of them cooling her brow with a fan of peacock's feathers, the other sprinkling perfumes through the chamber, and now and again striving to amuse her by reading alōud from a ponderous illuminated tome, larger than a modern cyclopedia, the interminable adventures and sufferings of that true love, whose "course never did run smooth," and feats of knightly prowess, recorded in one of the interminable romances of the time. But to none of these did the Lady Guendolen seriously incline her ear; and the faces of the attendant girls began to wear an expression, not of weariness only, but of discontent, and, perhaps, even of a deeper and bitterer feeling.

The Lady Guendolen was ill at ease; she was, most rare occurrence for one of her soft though impulsive disposition, impatient, perhaps querulous.

She could not be amused by any of their efforts. Her mind was far away; she craved something which they could not give, and was restless at their inability. Three times since her awakening, though the hour was still early, she had inquired for Sir Yvo, and had sent to desire his presence. The first time, her messengers brought her back word that he had not yet arisen; the second, that he was breakfasting, but now, in the knight's hall with Sir Philip, and the Sieurs of Maltravers, De Vesey, and Mauleverer, who had ridden over to Waltheofstow to fly their hawks, and that he would be with her ere long; and the third, that the good knight must have

forgotten, for that he had taken horse and ridden away with the rest of the company into the meadows by the banks of brimful Idle, to enjoy the "Mystery of Rivers," as it was the fashion to term the sport of falconry, in the high-flown language of the chase.

For a moment her pale face flushed, her eye flashed, and she bit her lip, and drummed impatiently with her little fingers on the velvet-pillows which supported her aching head; then, smiling at her own momentary ill-humor, she bade her girl Marguerite go seek the Saxon maiden, Edith, if she were in the castle, and if not, to see that a message should be sent down for her to the serfs' quarter.

With many a toss of her pretty head, and many a wayward feminine expression of annoyance, which from ruder lips would probably have taken the shape of an imprecation, the injured damsel betook herself, through winding passages and stairways in the thickness of the wall, to the pages' waiting-chamber on the next floor below. Then tripping, with a demure look, into the square vaulted room, in which were lounging three gayly-dressed, long-haired boys, one twanging a guitar in the embrasure of the window, and the other two playing at tables on a board covered with a scarlet cloth—

"Here, Damian," she said, somewhat sharply, for the temper of the mistress is sure to be reflected in that of the maid, losing nothing by the transmission, "for what are you loitering there, with that old tuneless gittern, when the Lady Guendolen has been calling for you this hour past?"

"And how, in the name of St. Hubert," replied the boy, who had rather been out with the falconers on the breezy leas, than mewed in the hall to await a lady's pleasure—"how, in

the name of St. Hubert! should I know that the Lady Guendolen had called for me, when no one has been near this old den since Sir Yvo rode forth on brown Roncesval, with Diamond on his fist? And as for my gittern being tuneless, I 've heard you tell a different tale, pretty Mistress Marguerite. But let us have your message, if you 've got one; for I see you 're as fidgety as a thorough-bred sorrel filly, and as hot-tempered, too."

"Sorrel filly, indeed!" said the girl, half-laughing, half-indignant. "I wish you could see my lady, Damian, if you call me fidgety and hot-tempered. I wish you could see my lady, that 's just all, this morning."

"The message, the message, Marguerite, if there be one, or if you have aught in your head but to make mischief."

"Why, I do believe my lady's bewitched since her fall; for nothing will go down with her now-a-days but that pink-and-white, flaxen-haired doll, Edith. I can't think what she sees in her, that she must needs ever have the clumsy Saxon wench about her. I should think gentle Norman blood might serve her turn."

"I don't know, Marguerite," answered the boy, wishing to tease her; "Edith is a very pretty girl, indeed; I don't know but she 's the very prettiest I ever saw. Dark-haired and dark-eyed people always admire their opposites, they say; and for my part, I think her blue eyes glance as if they reflected heaven's own light in them; and her flaxen-hair looks like a cloud high up in heaven, that has just caught the first golden glitter of the morning sunbeams. And clumsy! how can you call her clumsy, Marguerite? I am sure, when she came flitting down the hill, with her long locks flowing in

the breeze, and her thin garments streaming back from her shapely figure, she looked liker to a creature of the air, than to a mere mortal girl, running down a sandy road. I should like to see you run like her, Mistress Marguerite."

"Me run!" exclaimed the Norman damsel, indignantly; "when ever did you see a Norman lady *run?* But you 're just like the rest of them; caught ever by the first fresh face. Well, sir, since you 're so bewitched, like my pretty lady above stairs, with your Saxon angel, the message I have brought you will just meet your humor. You will see, sir, if this Saxon angel be in the castle, sir; and if she be not, sir, your magnificence will proceed to the Saxon quarter, and request her angelship to come forthwith to my lady's chamber, and to come quickly, too. And you can escort her, Sir Page, and lend her your hand up the hill; and steal a kiss, if you can, Sir Page, on the way!"

"Just so, Mistress Marguerite," returned the boy, "just so. Your commands shall be obeyed to the letter. And as to the kiss, I 'll try, if I can get a chance; but I 'm afraid she 's too modest to kiss young men."

And, taking up his dirk and bonnet from the board, he darted out of the room, without awaiting her reply, having succeeded, to his heart's content, in chafing her to somewhat higher than blood-heat; so that she returned to her lady's bower even more discomposed than when she left it; but Guendolen was too much occupied with other thoughts to notice the girl's ill-temper, and within half an hour a light foot was heard at the door, and the Saxon slave girl entered.

"How can I serve you, dear lady?" she said, coming up,

and kneeling at the couch side. "You are very pale. I trust you be not the worse this morning."

"Very weak, Edith, and sore all over. I feel as if every limb were broken; and I want you, with your gentle hand and gentle voice, to soothe me."

"Ah! dearest lady, our Holy Mother send that your spirit never may be so sore as to take no heed of the body's aching, nor your heart so broken as to know not whether your limbs were torn asunder."

CHAPTER X.

THE LADY AND THE SLAVE.

"Weep not for him that dieth,
For his struggling soul is free,
And the world from which it flieth
Is a world of misery;
But weep for him that weareth
The collar and the chain;
To the agony he beareth,
Death were but little pain."

CAROLINE NORTON.

"WHAT mean you, Edith?" inquired the girl, raising herself from her pillow, as her attention was called to the unusually subdued tones of the Saxon maiden, who was, in her ordinary mood, so gay and joyous, and who appeared to be the general favorite of all around her; "what mean you, Edith?" she repeated; "you can not be speaking of yourself; you, who are ever blithesome and light-hearted as the bee on the blossom, or the bird on the bough. You can have no sorrows of the heart, I think, so penetrating as to make all outward bodily pains forgotten, and yet—you are pale, you are weeping? Tell me, girl—tell me, dear Edith, and let me be your friend."

"Friend! lady," said the girl, looking at her wistfully, yet doubtfully withal; "you *my* friend, noble lady! That were

indeed impossible. I will not say, that to the poor, to the Saxon, to the *slave*, there can be *no* friend, under heaven; but that you—you, a noble and a Norman! Alas! alas! that were indeed impossible!"

"Impossible!" cried Guendolen, eagerly, forgetting her ailments in her fine and feeling excitement. "Wherefore, how should it be impossible? One God made us both, Edith; and made us both out of one clay, with one life here on earth, and one hereafter; both children of one fallen race, and heirs of one promise; both daughters of one fair, free land; both Englishwomen—then why not friends, Edith, and sisters?"

"Of one land, lady, it is true," said the girl, gently. "Yes! daughters of one *fair* land, for even to the slave England is very beautiful and dear, even as to you she is *free*. But for us, who were once her first-born and her favorites, that magic word has passed away, that charm has ceased, forever. For us, in free England's wide-rejoicing acres, there is no spot free, save the six feet of earth that shall receive our bodies, when the soul shall be a slave's no longer. Lady, lady, alas! noble lady, if one God made us both of one clay, that shall go downward to mingle with the common sod, and of one spirit that shall mount upward, when the weariness and woe shall be at an end forever, man has set a great gulf between us, that we can not pass over it at all, to come the one unto the other. Our wants may be the same, while we are here below, and our hopes may be the same heavenward; but there all sameness ends between us. My joys can not be your joys, and God forbid that my sorrows should be yours, either. Our hearts may not feel, our heads may not think, in unison, even if our flesh be of one texture, and our souls of one spirit.

You are good, and gentle, and kind, lady, but you may never understand what it is to be such as I."

She ceased, but she ceased weeping also, and seemed lost in deep thought, and almost forgetful of herself and her surroundings, as she remained on her knees by the bedside of Guendolen, with her head drooping from her fair bended neck, and her embrowned but shapely hands folded in her lap.

The lady looked at her silently for a few moments, partly in sympathy, partly, it must be said, in wonder. New ideas were beginning to be awakened in her mind, and a perception of something, which had never before dawned upon her, became palpable and strong.

That which we behold, and have beheld daily perhaps for years, naturally becomes so usual and customary in our eyes, that we cease to regard it as any thing but as a fact, of which we have never seen and scarcely can conceive any thing to the contrary—that we look at it as a part of that system which we call nature, and of which we never question the right or the wrong, the injustice or the justice, but, knowing that it *is*, never think of inquiring wherefore it is, and whether it ought to be.

Thus it was with Guendolen de Taillebois. She had been accustomed, during all her life, to see Saxons as serfs, and rarely in any other capacity; for the franklins and thanes who had retained their independence, their freedom, and a portion of their ancestral acres, were few in numbers, and held but little intercourse with their Norman neighbors, being regarded by them as rude and semi-barbarous inferiors, while they, in turn, regarded them as cruel and insolent usurpers and oppressors.

She had seen these serfs, rudely attired indeed, and employed in rugged, laborious, and menial occupations; but, then, it was clear that their boorish demeanor, stolid expression, and apparent lack of capacity or intelligence for any superior employment, seemed to indicate them as persons filling the station in society for which nature had adapted them. Well-clad, sufficiently clothed, warmly lodged—in all outward things perhaps equal, if not superior, to the peasantry of most European countries in the present day—never, except in extreme and exceptional cases, cruelly or severely treated, since it was ever the owner's interest to regard the well-doing of his serfs, it had never occurred to her that the whole race was in itself, from innate circumstances, and apart from extraordinary sorrows or sufferings, hopeless, miserable, and conscious of unmerited but irretrievable degradation.

Had she considered the subject, she would of course have perceived and admitted that sick or in health, sorrowful or at ease, to be compelled to toil on, toil on, day after day, wearily, at the bidding and for the benefit of another, deriving no benefit from that toil beyond a mere subsistence, was an unhappy and forlorn condition. Yet, how many did she not see of her own conquering countrymen of the lower orders, small landholders in the country, small artisans and mechanics in the boroughs, reduced to the same labors, and nearly to the same necessity.

With the personal condition or habits of the serfs, the ladies and even the lords of the great Norman families had little acquaintance, little means even of becoming acquainted. The services of their fortalices, all but those menial and sordid offices of which those exalted persons had no cognizance, were

discharged by domestics, higher or lower in grade, the highest being of gentle blood, and, in very noble houses, even of noble blood, of their own proud race; and the Saxons, whether bond-servants of the soil, or, what was of rare occurrence at that time, free tenants on man service, were employed in the fields or in the forest, under the bailiff or overseer, who ruled them at his own discretion, and punished them, if punishment were needed, with the stocks, the gyves, or the scourge, without consulting the lord, and of course without so much as the knowledge of the lady.

Even if, by hazard, it did reach the dainty ears of some fair chatelaine, that Osrick or Edmund had undergone the lash for some misdoing or short-coming, she heard of it much as a modern lady would read of the committal of a pickpocket or drunkard to the treadmill, or of a vagrant hussy to pick hemp; wondering why those low creatures would do such wicked things, and sorrowfully musing why such punishments should be necessary—never suspecting the injustice of the law, or doubting the necessity of the punishment.

And eminently thus it was with Guendolen. While in her good aunt's priory, she had ever seen the serfs of the church well looked after, well doing, not overworked, not oppressed, cared for if sick, comforted if sorrowing, well tended in age, a contented if not a happy race, so far as externals only were regarded, and nothing hitherto had led her to look farther than to externals. On her father's princely barony she saw even less of them than she had been accustomed to do at the priory, passing them casually only when in the fields at haymaking or harvest work, or pausing perhaps to observe a rosy-cheeked child in the Saxon quarter, or to notice a cherry-

lipped maiden by the village well. But here, too, so far as she did see, she saw them neither squalid nor starved, neither miserable nor maltreated. No acts of tyranny or cruelty reached her ears, perhaps none happened which should reach them; and of the rigorous, oppressive, insolent, and cruel laws which regulated their condition, controlled their progress, prevented their rise in the social scale, fettered and cramped their domestic relations, she knew nothing.

Since her sojourn at Walthcofstow, she had gained more personal acquaintance with her down-trodden Saxon countrymen and countrywomen, and more especially since her accident in the forest, than in all her previous life.

For, in the first place, Sir Philip de Morville, being unmarried and without female relations in his family, had no women of Norman blood employed as attendants or domestics in the castle, the whole work of which was performed by serf girls of various degrees, under the superintendence of an emancipated Saxon dame, who presided over what we should now call the housekeeper's department. Of these girls, Edith, and one or two others, Elgythas, Berthas, and the like, ministered to the Lady's Bower, and having perhaps contracted something of unusual refinement and expression from a nearer attendance on the more courtly race, and especially on the Norman ladies who at times visited the castle, presented, it is certain, unusually favorable specimens of the Saxon peasantry, and had attracted the attention of Guendolen in a greater degree than any Saxons she had previously encountered.

Up to that time, she had regarded them, certainly, on the whole, as a slow, as a somewhat stolid, impassive, and unim-

passioned race, less mercurial than her own impetuous, impulsive kindred, and far less liable to strong emotions or keen perceptions, whether of pain or pleasure. The girlish liveliness and gentleness, and even the untaught graces of Edith had, at the first, attracted her; and, as she was thrown a good deal into contact with her, from the fact of her constant attendance on the chambers she occupied, she had become much interested in her, regarding her as one of the happiest, most artless, and innocent little girls she had ever met—one, she imagined, on whom no shadow of grief had ever fallen, and whose humble lot was one of actual contentment, if not of positive enjoyment.

Nor, hitherto, insomuch as actual realities were concerned, was Guendolen much in error. Sir Philip de Morville, as has been stated already, was, according to the times and their tenor, a good and considerate lord. His bailiff was a well-intentioned, strict man, intent on having his master's work done to the last straw, but beyond that neither an oppressor nor a tyrant. Kenric, her distant kinsman and betrothed, was confessedly the best man and most favored servant in the quarter; and his mother, who had grown old in the service of Sir Philip's father, whom she had nursed with simple skill through the effects of many a mimic battle in the lists, or real though scarce more dangerous fray, now superannuated, reigned as much the mistress of her son's hearth as though she had been a free woman, and the cot in which she dwelt her freehold.

Edith herself was the first bower-maiden of the castle, and, safe under the protecting wings of dame Ulrica, the housewife, defied the impertinence of forward pages, the importunate

gallantry of esquires, and was cheerfully acknowledged as the best and prettiest lass of the lot, by the old gray-haired seneschal, in his black velvet suit and gold chain of office.

Really, therefore, none of her own immediate family had known any actual wants, or suffered any material hardships or sorrows, through their condition, up to the period at which my tale commences. Their greatest care, perhaps, had arisen from the temper, surly, rude, insolent, aud provocative, of Eadwulf the Red, Kenric's brother, who had already, by misconduct, and even actual crime, according to the Norman code, subjected himself to severe penalties, and been reduced, in default of harsher treatment, to the condition of a mere slave, a chattel, saleable like an ox or ass, at the pleasure of their lord.

This, both in its actual sense, as keeping them in constant apprehension of what further distress Eadwulf's future misconduct might bring upon them, and in its moral bearing, as holding them constantly reminded of their own servile condition, had been, thus far, their prime grief and cause of complaint, had they been persons given to complain.

Still, although well-nigh a century had elapsed since the Norman Conquest, and the heir of the Conqueror in the fourth generation was sitting on the throne which that great and politic prince won on the fatal day of Hastings, their condition had not become habitual or easy to those, at least, who had been reduced to slavery from freedom, by the consequences of that disastrous battle. And such was the condition of the family whence sprang Kenric and Edith. The Saxon thane, Waltheof, whose name and that of his abode had descended to the Norman fortalice which had arisen from the

ashes of his less aspiring manor, had resisted the Norman invaders so long, with such inveterate and stubborn valor, and, through the devotion of his tenants and followers, with such cost of life, that when he fell in fight, and his possessions were granted to his slayer, all the dwellers on his lands were involved in the common ruin.

To the serfs of the soil, who had been serfs before the conquest, it mattered but little. The slave to the Saxon was but changed into the slave of the Norman, and did not perhaps find in him a crueller, though he might a haughtier and more overbearing master. But to the freeman, the doom which consigned him to the fetters of the Norman, which converted him from the owner into the serf of the soil, was second only, if second, to the bitterness of death. And such had been the doom of the grandfather of Kenric and Eadwulf.

Their mother herself had been born free, not far from the hovel in which she still dwelt a slave, though she was but an infant when the hurricane of war and ruin swept over the green oaks of Sherwood, and had no memory of the time when she was not the thrall of a foreign lord. Her father, Wulfred, was the largest tenant under Waltheof, himself a franklin, or small landholder, and of blood as noble, and station more elevated than that of one half the adventurers who had flocked to the banner of William the invader. With his landlord and friend, he had fought to the last, not at Hastings only, but in every bloody ineffectual rising, until the last spark of Saxon liberty was trampled out under the iron hoofs of the Norman war-horse; but, less happy than Waltheof, he had survived to find himself a slave, and the father of slaves,

tilling for a cruel foreign conqueror the land which had been his own and his father's, and his father's father's, but in which he and his heirs should have no heritage for evermore, beyond the six-foot measure which should be meted to them every one, for his long home.

And the memory of these things had not yet passed away, nor the bitterness of the iron departed from the children, which had then entered into the soul of the parent.

An irrepressible desire came over the mind of Guendolen, to know and comprehend something more fully the sentiments and sorrows of the girl who had nursed and attended her so gently since her adventure with the stag; and perceiving intuitively that the slave girl, who, strange as it appeared to her, seemed to have a species of pride of her own, would not reveal her inward self in the presence of the vain and flippant Norman waiting girls, she hastened to dismiss them, without wounding their self-esteem, on a pretext of which they would be willing enough to avail themselves.

"Lilian and Marguerite," she said, "you must be weary my good girls, with watching me through this long night and my peevish temper must have made you yet more weary, for I feel that I am not myself, and that I have tried your patience. Go, therefore, now, and get some repose, that when I shall truly need your services again, you may be well at ease to serve me. I feel as if I could sleep now; and while I slumber Edith, here, can watch beside me, and drive away the gnats with her fan, as well as a more experienced bower-woman."

Whether the girls suspected or not that their mistress desired to be rid of them, they were not sorry to be dismissed from attendance on her couch; and whether they proposed to

devote the opportunity to repose, or to gay flirtation with the pages of their own lord's or of Sir Philip's household, they withdrew at once, leaving the lady gazing fixedly on the motionless and hardly conscious figure of the slave girl.

By a sudden impulse she passed her small white hand caressingly over the soft and abundant tresses of Edith's fair hair; and so unusual was the sensation to the daughter of the downfallen race, that she started, as if a blow had been dealt her, and blushed crimson, between surprise and wonder, as she raised her great blue eyes wide open to the face of the young lady.

"And is it so hard?" she asked, in reference more to what she understood Edith to mean, than to any thing she had spoken, or even hinted—"is it so hard, my poor child? I had thought that your lot sat as lightly on you as the dew-drop in the chalice of the bluebell. I had fancied you as happy as any one of us here below. Will you not tell me what is this sorrow which weighs on you so heavily? It may be I can do something to relieve it."

"Lady, I am, as you know, a Saxon, and a slave, the daughter of a slave, and, should it ever be my lot to wed, the wife, to be, of a serf, a bondman of the soil, and the mother of things doomed, or ere they see the blessed light of Heaven, to the collar and the chain from the cradle to the grave. Think you a woman, with such thoughts as these at her heart, can be very gay or joyous?"

"And yet, you were both gay and joyous yesterday, Edith; and all last week, since I have been at the castle, I have heard no sounds so gay or so pleasant to my ear as your merry ballads. And you are no more a serf this morn than you were

yestrene, and the good God alone knows what any of us all may be on the morrow, Edith. Something, I know, must have happened, girl, to make you wear a face so altered on this beautiful summer day, and carry so sad a heart, when all the world is so happy."

"All the world, lady!" replied Edith; "all the world happy! Alas! not one tenth of it, unless you mean the beasts and the birds, which, knowing nothing, are blithe in their happy innocence. Of the human world around us, lady, one half knows not, and more by far than one half cares not, how miserable or how hopeless are their fellows—nor, if all knew and cared for all, could they either comprehend or console, much less relieve, the miserable."

"But if I be one of those, Edith, who know not, I am at least not one of those who care not. Therefore, I come back to the place whence I started. Something has happened, which makes you dwell so much more dolefully to-day, upon that which weighed not on you, yestrene, heavier than a feather."

"Something *has* happened, lady. But it is all one; for it resolves itself in all but into this; I am a slave—a slave, until life is over."

"This is strange," said Guendolen, thoughtfully. "I do not understand—*may* not understand this. It does not seem to me that your duties are so very hard, your life so very painful, or your rule so very strict, that you should suddenly thus give way to utter gloom and despondency, for no cause but what you have known for years, and found endurable until this moment."

"But henceforth unendurable. Oh! talk not, lady, talk

not. You may console the dying, for to him there is a hope, a present hope of a quick-coming future. But comfort not the slave; for to him the bitterest and most cruel past is happier than the hopeless present, if only for that it *is* past; and the present, hopeless as it is, is yet less desperate than the future; for to the slave, in the future, every thing except happiness is possible. I may seem to speak enigmas to you, lady, and I am sure that you do not understand me—how should you? None but a slave can know or imagine what it is to be a slave; none can conceive what a slave feels, thinks, suffers. And yet a slave is a man, after all; and a lord is no more than a man, while living—and yet, what a gulf between them!"

"And you will not tell me, Edith," persisted the Lady Guendolen, "you will not tell me what it is that has happened to you of late, which makes you grieve so despondently, thus on a sudden, over your late-endured condition? Then you must let me divine it. You have learned your own heart of late. You have discovered that you love, Edith."

"And if it were so, lady," replied the girl, darkly, "were not that enough to make a woman, who is at once a Christian and a slave, both despond and despair? First to love a slave—for to love other than a slave, being herself a slave were the same, as for a mortal to be enamored of a star in heaven—and then, even if license were granted to wed him she loved, which is not certain or even of usual occurrence, to be the mother of babes, to whom but one reality is secured, beyond a peradventure, the reality that they too must be slaves and wretched. But you are wrong, lady. I have not learned my own heart of late—I have known it long. I have not

discovered but now that I love, nor has he whom I love. We have been betrothed this year and better."

"What then? what then?" cried Guendolen, eagerly. "Will not Sir Philip consent? If that be all, dry your tears, Edith; so small a boon as that I can command by a single word."

"Sir Philip heeds not such matters, lady. His bailiff *has* consented, if that were all."

"What is it, then? This scruple about babes," said Guendolen, thoughtfully. "It is sad—it is sad, indeed. Yet if you love *him*, as you say, and your life in its actual reality be not so bitter—"

"No, lady, no; it is not even that. If I had scruples on that head, they have vanished; Kenric has convinced me—"

"Kenric!" exclaimed Guendolen, starting erect into a sitting attitude, forgetful of her pains and bruises. "What, the brave man who saved me from the stag at the risk of his own life, who was half slain in serving me—is he—is he *your* Kenric?"

"The same," answered Edith, with the quiet accent of fixed sorrow. "And the same for whom you procured the priceless boon of liberty."

An idea flashed, like the electric fluid, across the mind of Guendolen, who up to that moment had suspected nothing of the connection between her preserver and the beautiful girl before her, and who knew nothing of his grand refusal to accept even liberty itself, most inestimable of all gifts, which could not be shared by those whom he loved beyond liberty or life; and she imagined that she read the secret, and had pierced the maiden's mystery.

"Can it be?" she said, sorrowfully, and seeming rather to be communing with herself, than inquiring of her companion. "Can it be that one so brave, so generous, and seemingly so noble, should be so base and abject? Oh! but these men, these men, if tale and history speak true, they are the same all and ever—false, selfish, and deceivers!"

"Kenric, lady?"

"And because he is free—the freeman but of the hour—he has despised thee, Edith, the slave girl? But hold thy head high, sweet one, and thy heart higher. Thou shalt be free to-morrow, girl, and the mate of his betters; it shall be thou, to-morrow, who shall repay scorn with scorn, and—"

"No, lady, no," cried the girl, who had been hitherto silenced and overpowered by the impulsive vehemence of Guendolen. "You misapprehend me altogether. It is not I whom he rejected, for that *he* was free; but liberty that he cast from him, as a toy not worth the having, because *I* might not be free with him—I, and his aged mother, of whom he is, alone, the only stay and comfort."

"Noble! noble!" cried the Norman girl, joyously clapping her hands together. "Noble and glorious, gentle and great! This, this, indeed, is true nobility! Why do we Normans boast ourselves, as if we alone could think great thoughts, or do great deeds? and here we are outdone, beyond all question or comparison, in the true gentleness of perfect chivalry; and that, by a Saxon slave. But be of good cheer, Edith, my sister and my friend; be of good cheer. The sun shall not go down looking upon you still a slave, nor upon your Kenric, nor yet upon his mother. You shall be free, all free, free as the blessed winds of heaven, before the sun set in the sea.

And you shall be the wife of no serf, but of a freeman, and a freeholder, in my own manor lands of Kendal upon Kent; and you shall be, God willing, the mother of free Englishmen, to do their lady as leal service as their stout father did before them. Fear nothing, and doubt nothing, Edith; for this shall be, so surely as I am Guendolen of Taillebois. So small a thing as this I can right readily do with my good father, and he as readily with our true friend, noble Sir Philip de Morville. But hark! I hear their horses' hoofs and the whimpering of their hounds in the court-yard. To the bartizan, girl, to the bartizan! Is it they—is it the chase returning?"

"It is they, dear lady—your noble sire and Sir Philip, and all the knights who rode forth this morning—all laughing in high merriment and glee! and now they mount the steps—they have entered."

"No better moment, then, to press a boon. Fly, girl, be your wishes wings to your speech. I would see my father straightway!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE LADY'S GAME.

"And if she will, she will! you may depend on 't."
OLD SAYING.

It did not prove, in truth, a matter altogether so easy of accomplishment as Guendolen, in her warm enthusiasm and sympathy, had boasted, to effect that small thing, as she had termed it in her thoughtless eagerness, the liberation of three human beings, and the posterity of two, through countless generations, from the curse and degradation of hereditary bondage.

The value, in the first place, of the unhappy beings, to each of whom, as to a beast of burden, or to a piece of furniture, a regular money-price was attached, although they could not be sold away from the land to which they appertained, unless by their own consent, was by no means inconsiderable even to one so rich as Sir Yvo de Taillebois; for in those days the wealth even of the greatest landed proprietors lay rather in the sources of revenue, than in revenue itself; and men, whose estates extended over many parishes, exceeding far the limits of a modern German principality, whose forests contained [redacted] of deer to be numbered by the thousand head, whose

cattle pastured over leagues of hill and valley, who could raise armies, at the lifting of their banners, larger than many a sovereign prince of the nineteenth century, were often hard set to find the smallest sums of ready money on emergency, unless by levying tax or scutage on their vassals, or by applying to the Jews and Lombards.

In the second place, the scruples of Kenric, which justly appeared so generous and noble to the fine, unsophisticated intellect of the young girl, by no means appeared in the same light to the proud barons, accustomed to regard the Saxon, and more especially the serf, as a being so palpably and manifestly inferior, that he was scarcely deemed to possess rights, much less sentiments or feelings, other than those of the lower animals.

To them, therefore, the Saxon's refusal to consent to his own sale as a step necessary to manumission, appeared an act of insolent outrecuidance, or at the best a bold and impudent piece of chicanery, whereby to extort from his generous patrons a recompense three times greater than they had thought of conferring on him, in the first instance.

It was with scorn, therefore, and almost with anger, that Sir Yvo listened to the first solicitations of Guendolen in behalf of her clients; and he laughed at her high-flown sentiments of admiration and wonder at the self-devotion, the generosity, the immovable constancy, of the noble Saxon.

"The *noble* Saxon! By the glory of Heaven!" he exclaimed, "these women would talk one out of all sense of reason, with their sympathetic jargon! Why, here 's a sturdy knave, who has done what, to win all this mighty gratitude? Just stuck his whittle into a wild stag's weasard, and saved a

lady's life, more by good luck than by good service—as any man, or boy, of Norman blood, would have done in a trice, and thought no more of it; and then, when his freedom's tendered him as a reward for doing that for which ten-pence had well paid him, and for failing to do which he had deserved to be scourged till his bones lay bare, he is too mighty to accept it—marry! he names conditions, he makes terms, on which he will consent to oblige his lords by becoming free; and you—you plead for him. The *noble* Saxon! by the great gods, I marvel at you, Guendolen."

But she, with the woman's wily charm, replied not a word while he was in the tide of indignation and invective; but when he paused, exhausted for the moment by his own vehemence, she took up the word—

"Ten-pence would have well paid him! At least, I am well content to know," she said, "the value of my life, and that, too, at my own father's rating. The Saxons may be, as I have heard tell, but have not seen that they are, sordid, degraded, brutal, devoid of chivalry and courtesy and love of fame; but I would wager my life there is not a free Saxon man—no, not the poorest Franklin, who would not rate the life of his coarse-featured, sun-burned daughter at something higher than the value of a heifer. But it is very well. I am rebuked. I will trouble you no farther, valiant Sir Yvo de Taillebois. I have no *right* to trouble you, beausire, for I must sure be base-born, though I dreamed not of it, that my blood should be dearly bought at ten-pence. Were it of the pure current that mantled in the veins of our high ancestors, it should fetch something more, I trow, in the market."

[redacted] thou art childish, Guendolen, peevish, and all

unreasonable. I spoke not of thy life, and thou knowest it right well, but of the chance, the slight merit of his own, by which he saved it."

"Slight merit, father!"

"Pshaw! girl, thou hast gotten me on the mere play of words. But how canst make it tally with the vast ideas of this churl's chivalry and heaven-aspiring nobility of soul, that he so little values liberty, the noblest, most divine of all things, not immortal, as to reject it thus ignobly?"

"It skills not to argue with you, sir," she answered, sadly; "for I see you are resolved to refuse me my boon, as wherefore should you not, setting so little value on this poor life of mine. I know that I am but a poor, weak child, that I was a disappointment to you in my cradle, seeing that I neither can win fresh honors to your house amid the spears and trumpets, nor transmit even the name, of which you are so proud, to future generations; but I am, at least in pride, too much a Taillebois to crave, as an importunate, unmannerly suitor, what is denied to me as a free grace. Only this—were you and I in the hands of the Mussulman, captives and slaves together, and you should accept freedom as a gift, leaving your own blood in bondage, I think the Normans would hold you dishonored noble, and false knight; I am sure the Saxons would pronounce you *nidering*. I have done, sir. Let the Saxon die a slave, if you think it comports with the dignity of De Taillebois to be a slave's debtor. I thought, if you did not love me, that you loved the memory of my mother better."

"There! there!" replied Sir Yvo, quite overpowered, and half amused by the mixture of art and artlessness, of real pas-

sion and affected sense of injury by which she had worked out her purpose. "There! there! enough said, Guendolen. You will have it as you will, depend on 't. I might have known you would, from the beginning, and so have spared myself the pains of arguing with you. It must be as you will have it, and I will go buy the brood of Sir Philip at once; pray Heaven only that they will condescend to be manumitted, without my praying them to accept their liberty upon my knee. It will cost me a thousand zecchins or more, I warrant me, at the first, and then I shall have to find them lands of my lands, and to be security for their "were and mund," and I know not what. Alack-a-day! women ever! ever women! when we are young it is our sisters, our mistresses, our wives; when we grow old, our daughters!—and by my hopes of Heaven, I believe the last plague is the sorest!"

"My funeral expenses, with the dole and alms and masses, would scarcely have cost you so much, Sir Yvo. Pity he did not let the stag work his will on me! Don't you think so, sir?"

"Leave off your pouting, silly child. You have your own way, and that is all you care for; I don't believe you care the waving of a feather for the Saxons, so you may gratify your love of ruling, and force your father, who should show more sense and firmness, to yield to every one of your small caprices. So smooth that bent brow, and let us see a smile on those rosy lips again, and you may tell your Edith, if that 's her name, that she shall be a free woman before sunset."

"So you confess, after all this flurry, that it was but a *small* caprice, concerning which you have so thwarted me. Well, I forgive you, sir, by this token,"—and, as she spoke,

she threw her white arms about his neck, and kissed him on the forehead tenderly, before she added, "and now, to punish you, the next caprice I take shall be a great one, and you shall grant it to me without wincing. Hark you, there are the trumpets sounding for dinner, and you not point-device for the banquet-hall! but never heed to-day. There are no ladies to the feast, since I am not so well at ease as to descend the stair. Send me some ortolans and beccaficos from the table, sir; and above all, be sure, with the comfits and the Hypocras, you send me the deeds of manumission for Kenric and Edith, all in due form, else I will never hold you true knight any more, or gentle father."

"Fare you well, my child, and be content. And if you rule your husband, when you get one, as you now rule your father, Heaven in its mercy help him, for he will have less of liberty to boast than the hardest-worked serf of them all. Fare you well, little wicked Guendolen."

And she laughed a light laugh as the affectionate father, who used so little of the father's authority, left the Bower, and cried joyously, "Free, free! all free! I might have been sure that I should succeed with him. Dear, gentle father! and yet once, once for a time, I was afraid. Yet I was right, I was right; and the right must ever win the day. Edith! Edith!" she cried, as she heard her light foot without. "You are free. I have conquered!"

It is needless, perhaps it were impossible, to describe the mingled feelings of delight, gratitude, and wonder, coupled to something akin to incredulity, which were aroused in the simple breast of the Saxon maiden, by the tidings of her certain manumission, and, perhaps even gladder yet, of her trans-

ference, in company with all those whom she loved, to a new home among scenes which, if not more lovely than those in which her joyless childhood and unregretted youth had elapsed, were at least free from recollections of degradation and disgrace.

The news circulated speedily through the castle, how the gratitude of the Lady Guendolen had won the liberty of the whole family of her preserver, with the sole exception of the gross thrall Eadwulf; and it was easily granted to Edith, that she should be the bearer of the happy tidings to the Saxon quarter.

Sweet ever to the captive's, to the slave's, ear must be the sound of liberty, and hard the task, mighty the sacrifice, to reject it, on any terms, however hard or painful; but if ever that delightful sound was rendered doubly dear to the hearer, it was when the sweetest voice of the best beloved—even of her for whom the blessed boon had been refused, as without her nothing worth—conveyed it to the ears of the brave and constant lover, enhanced by the certainty that she, too, who announced the happiness, had no small share in procuring it, as she would have a large share of enjoying it, and in rendering happy the life which she had crowned with the inestimable gift of freedom.

That was a happy hearth, a blessed home, on that calm summer evening, though death had been that very day borne from its darkened doors, though pain and suffering still dwelt within its walls. But when the heart is glad, and the soul contented and at peace, the pains of the body are easily endured, if they are felt at all; and happier hearts, save one alone, which was discontent and bitter, perhaps bitterer from the contemplation of the unparticipated bliss of the others,

were never bowed in prayer, or filled with gratitude to the Giver of all good.

Eadwulf sat, gloomy, sullen, and hard of heart, beside the cheerful group, though not one of it, refusing to join in prayer, answering harshly that he had nothing for which to praise God, or be thankful to him; and that to pray for any thing to him would be useless, for that he had never enjoyed his favor or protection.

His feelings were not those of natural regret at the continuance of his own unfortunate condition, so much as of unnatural spite at the alteration in the circumstances of his mother, his brother, and that brother's beautiful betrothed; and it was but too clear that, whether he should himself remain free or no, he had been better satisfied that they should continue in their original condition, rather than that they should be elevated above himself by any better fortune.

Kenric had in vain striven to soothe his morose and selfish mood, to cheer his desponding and angry, rather than sorrowful, anticipations—he had pointed out to him that his own liberation from slavery, and elevation to the rank and position of a freeman and military tenant of a fief of land, did not merely render it probable, but actually make it certain, that Eadwulf also would be a freeman, and at liberty to join his kindred in a short time in their new home; "for it must be little, indeed, that you know of my heart," said the brave and manly peasant, "or of that of Edith, either, if you believe that either of us could enjoy our own liberty, or feel our own happiness other than unfinished and incomplete, so long as you, our own and only brother, remain in slavery and sorrow. Your price is not rated so high, brother Eadwulf, but that we

may easily save enough from our earnings, when once free to labor for ourselves, within two years at the farthest, to purchase your freedom too from Sir Philip; and think how easy will be the labor, and how grateful the earnings, when every day's toil finished, and every zecchin saved, will bring us a day nearer to a brother's happy manumission."

"Words!" he replied, doggedly—"mighty fine words, in truth. I marvel how eloquent we have become, all on the sudden. Your labor *will* be free, as you say, and your earnings your own; and wondrous little shall I profit by them. I should think now, since you are so mighty and powerful with the pretty Lady Guendolen, all for a mere chance which might have befallen me, or any one, all as well as yourself, you might have stipulated for my freedom—I had done so I am sure, though I do not pretend to your fine sympathies and heaven-reaching notions—"

"And so have lost *their* freedom!" replied Kenric, shaking his head, as he waved his hand toward the women; "for that would have been the end of it. For the rest, I made no stipulations; I only refused freedom, if it were procurable only by leaving my aged mother and my bethrothed bride in slavery. As it was, I had lost my own liberty, and not gained theirs, if it had not been for Edith, who won for us all, what I had lost for one."

"And no one thought of me, or my liberty! I was not worth thinking of, nor worthy, I trow, to be free."

"You say well, Eadwulf—you say right well," cried Edith, her fair face flushing fiery red, and her frame quivering with excitement. "You are *not* worthy to be free. There is no freedom, or truth, or love, or honor, in your heart. Your

spirit, like your body, is a serf's, and one would do dishonor to the soul of a dog, if she likened it to yours. Had *you* been offered freedom, you had left all, mother, brother, and betrothed—had any maiden been so ill-advised as betroth herself to so heartless a churl—to slavery, and misery, and infamy, or death, to win your own coveted liberty. Nay! I believe, if they had been free, and you a serf, you would have betrayed them into slavery, so that you might be alone free. A man who can not feel and comprehend such a sacrifice as Kenric made for all of us, is capable of no sacrifice himself, and is not worthy to be called a man, or to be a freeman."

Thus passed away that evening, and with the morrow came full confirmation; and the bold Saxon stood upon his native soil, as free as the air he breathed; the son, too, of a free mother, and with a free, fair maiden by his side, soon to be the free wife of a free Englishman. And none envied them, not one of their fellow-serfs, who remained still condemned to toil wearily and woefully, until their life should be over—not one, save Eadwulf, the morose, selfish, slave-souled brother.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DEPARTURE.

"He mounted himself on a steed so talle,
And her on a pale palfraye,
And slung his bugle about his necke,
And roundly they rode awaye."

THE CHILDE OF ELLE.

THE glad days rapidly passed over, and the morning of the tenth day, as it broke fair and full of promise in the unclouded eastern sky, looked on a gay and happy cavalcade, in all the gorgeous and glittering attire of the twelfth century, setting forth in proud array, half martial and half civil, from the gates of Waltheofstow.

First rode an old esquire, with three pages in bright half armor, hauberks of chain mail covering their bodies, and baçinets of steel on their heads, but with their arms and lower limbs undefended, except by the sleeves of their buff jerkins and their close-fitting hose of dressed buckskin. Behind these, a stout man-at-arms carried the guidon with the emblazoned bearings of his leader, followed by twenty mounted archers, in doublets of Kendal green, with yew bows in their hands, woodknives, and four-and-twenty peacock-feathered cloth-yard arrows in their girdles, and battle-axes at their saddle-bows.

In the midst rode Sir Yvo de Taillebois, all armed save his head, which was covered with a velvet mortier with a long drooping feather, and wearing a splendid surcoat; and, by his side, on a fleet Andalusian jennet, in a rich purple habit, furred at the cape and cuffs, and round the waist, with snow-white swansdown, the fair and gentle Guendolen, followed by three or four gay girls of Norman birth, and, happier and fairer than the happiest and fairest, the charming Saxon beauty, pure-minded and honest Edith. Behind these followed a train of baggage vans, cumbrous and lumbering concerns, groaning along heavily on their ill-constructed wheels, and a horse-litter, intended for the use of the lady, if weary or ill at ease, but at the present conveying the aged freed-woman, who was departing, now in well-nigh her ninetieth summer, from the home of her youth, and the graves of her husband and five goodly sons, departing from the house of bondage, to a free new home in the far north-west.

The procession was closed by another body of twenty more horse-archers, led by two armed esquires; and with these rode Kenric, close shaven, and his short, cropped locks curling beneath a jaunty blue bonnet, with a heron's feather, wearing doublet and hose of forest green, with russet doeskin buskins, the silver badge of Sir Yvo de Taillebois on his arm, and in his hand the freeman's trusty weapon, the puissant English bow, which did such mighty deeds, and won such *los* thereafter, at those immortal fields of Cressy and Poictiers, and famous Agincourt.

As the procession wound down the long slope of the castle hill, and through the Saxon quarter, the serfs, who had collected to look on the show, set up a loud hurrah, the ancient

Saxon cry of mirth, of greeting, or defiance. It was the cry of *caste*, rejoicing at the elevation of a brother to the true station of a man. But there was one voice which swelled not the cry; one man, who turned sullenly away, unable to bear the sight of another's joy, turned away, muttering vengeance—Eadwulf the Red—the only soul so base, even among the fallen and degraded children of servitude and sorrow, as to refuse to be glad at the happiness which it was not granted him to share, though that happiness were a mother's and a brother's escape from misery and degradation.

Many days, many weeks, passed away, while that gay cavalcade were engaged in their long progress to the north-westward, through the whole length of the beautiful West Riding of Yorkshire, from its southern frontier, where it abuts on Nottinghamshire and the wild county of Derby, to its western border, where its wide moors and towering crag-crested peaks are blended with the vast treeless fells of Westmoreland.

And during all that lengthened but not weary progress, it was but rarely, and then only at short intervals, that they were out of the sight of the umbrageous and continuous forest.

Here and there, in the neighborhood of some ancient borough, such as Doncaster, Pontefract, or Ripon, through which lay their route, they came upon broad oases of cultivated lands, with smiling farms and pleasant corn-fields and free English homesteads, stretching along the fertile valley of some blue brimful river; again, and that more frequently, they found small forest-hamlets, wood-embosomed, with their little garths and gardens, clustering about the tower of some inferior feudal chief, literally set in a frame of verdure.

Sometimes vast tracks of rich and thriftily-cultured mea-

dow-lands, ever situate in the loveliest places of the shire, pastured by abundant flocks, and dotted with sleek herds of the already celebrated short-horns, told where the monks held their peaceful sway, enjoying the fat of the land; and proclaimed how, in those days at least, the priesthood of Rome were not the sensual, bigot drones, the ignorant, oppressive tyrants, whose whereabout can be now easily detected by the squalid and neglected state of lands and animals and men, whenever they possess the soil and control the people. Such were the famous Abbey-stedes of Fountain's and Jorvaulx, then, as now, both for fertility and beauty, the boast of the West Riding.

Still, notwithstanding these pleasant interchanges of rural with forest scenery, occurring so often as to destroy all monotony, and to keep up a delightful anticipation in the mind of the voyager, as to what sort of view would meet his eye on crossing yon hill-top, or turning that curvature of the wood-road, by far the greater portion of their way led them over sandy tracks, meandering like ribbons through wide glades of greensward, under the broad protecting arms of giant oaks and elms and beeches, the soft sod no less refreshing to the tread of the quadrupeds, than was the cool shadow of the twilight trees delicious to the riders.

Those forests of the olden day were rarely tangled or thicketlike, unless in marshy levels, where the alder, the willow, and other water-loving shrubs replaced the monarchs of the wild; or where, in craggy gullies, down which brawled impetuous the bright hill-streams, the yew, the holly, and the juniper, mixed with the silvery stems and quivering verdure of the birches, or the deeper hues of the broad-

leaved witch-elms and hazels, formed dingles fit for fairy bowers.

For the most part, the huge bolls of the forest-trees stood far apart, in long sweeping aisles, as regular as if planted by the hand of man, allowing the grass to grow luxuriantly in the shade, nibbled, by the vast herds of red and fallow deer and roes, into the softest and most even sward that ever tempted the foot of high-born beauty.

And no more lovely sight can be imagined than those deep, verdant solitudes, at early morn, when the luxuriant feathery ferns, the broom and gorse blazing with their clusters of golden blossoms, the crimson-capped foxgloves, the sky-blue campanulas by the roadside, the clustering honeysuckles overrunning the stunt hawthorns, and vagrant briars and waving grasses were glittering far and near in their morning garniture of diamond dewdrops, with the long level rays of the new-risen sun streaming in yellow lustre down the glades, and casting great blue lines of shadow from every mossy trunk—no sight more lovely than the same scenes in the waning twilight, when the red western sky tinged the gnarled bolls with lurid crimson, and carpeted the earth with sheets of copper-colored light, while the skies above were darkened with the cerulean robes of night.

Nor was there lack of living sounds and sights to take away the sense of loneliness from the mind of the voyager in the green wilderness—the incessant songs of the thrush and blackbird, and whistle of the wood-robin, the mellow notes of the linnets, the willow warblers and the sedge birds in the watery brake, the harsh laugh of the green-headed wood-pecker, and the hoarse cooing of the innumerable stock-doves,

kept the air vocal during all the morning and evening hours; while the woods all resounded far and wide with the loud belling of the great stags, now in their lusty prime, calling their shy mates, or defying their lusty rivals, from morn to dewy eve.

And ever and anon, the wild cadences of the forest bugles, clearly winded in the distance, and the tuneful clamor of the deep-mouthed talbots, would tell of some jovial hunts-up.

Now it would be some gray-frocked hedge priest plodding his way alone on foot, or on his patient ass, who would return the passenger's benedicite with his smooth *pax vobiscum;* now it would be some green-kirtled forest lass who would drop her demure curtesy to the fair Norman lady, and shoot a sly glance from her hazel eyes at the handsome Norman pages. Here it would be a lord-abbot, or proud prior with his lay brothers, his refectioners and sumptners, his baggage-mules, and led Andalusian jennets, and as the poet sung,

> "With many a cross-bearer before,
> And many a spear behind,"

who would greet them fairly in some shady nook beside the sparkling brook or crystal well-head, and pray them of their courtesy to alight and share his poor convent fare, no less than the fattest haunch, the tenderest peacock, and the purest wine of Gascony, on the soft green sward.

There, it would be a knot of sun-burned Saxon woodmen, in their green frocks and buckram hose, with long bows in their hands, short swords and quivers at their sides, and bucklers of a span-breadth on their shoulders, men who had

never acknowledged Norman king, nor bowed to Norman yoke, who would stand at gaze, marking the party, from the jaws of some bosky dingle, too proud to yield a foot, yet too few to attack; proving that to be well accompanied, in those days, in Sherwood, was a matter less of pomp than of sound policy. Anon, receiving notice of their approach from the repeated bugle-blasts of his verdurers, as they passed each successive *mere* or forest-station, a Norman knight or noble, in his garb of peace, would gallop down some winding wood-path, with his slender train scattering far behind him, to greet his brother in arms, and pray him to grace his tower by refreshing his company and resting his fair and gentle daughter for a few days or hours, within its precincts.

In short, whether in the forest or in the open country, scarcely an hour, never a day, was passed, without their encountering some pleasant sight, some amusing incident, some interesting adventure. There was a vast fund of romance in the daily life of those olden days, an untold abundance of the picturesque, not a little, indeed, of what we should call stage-effect, in the ordinary habits and every-day affairs of men, which we have now, in our busy, headlong race for affluence, ambition, priority, in every thing good or evil, overlooked, if not forgotten.

Life was in England then, as it was in France up to the days of the Revolution, as it never has been at any time in America, as it is nowhere now, and probably never will be any where again, unless we return to the primitive, social equality, and manful independence of patriarchal times; when truth was held truth, and manhood manhood, the world over; *and some high*er purpose in mortality was acknowledged than

the mere acquiring, some larger nobleness in man than the mere possessing, of unprofitable wealth.

Much of life, then, was spent out of doors; the mid-day meal, the mid-day slumber, the evening dance, were enjoyed, alike by prince and peasant, under the shadowy forest-tree, or the verdure of the trellised bower. The use of flowers was universal; in every rustic festival, of the smallest rural hamlets, the streets would be arched and garlanded with wreaths of wild flowers; in every village hostelry, the chimney would be filled with fresh greens, the board decked with eglantine and hawthorn, the beakers crowned with violets and cowslips, just as in our days the richest ball-rooms, the grandest banquet-halls, are adorned with brighter, if not sweeter or more beautiful, exotics.

The great in those days had not lost "that touch of nature" which "makes the whole world kin" so completely, as to see no grace in simplicity, to find no beauty in what is beautiful alike to all, to enjoy nothing which can be enjoyed by others than the great and wealthy.

The humble had not been, then, bowed so low that the necessities had precluded all thought, all care, for the graces of the existence of man.

If the division between the noble and the common of the human race, as established by birth, by hereditary rank, by unalterable caste, were stronger and deeper and less eradicable than at this day, the real division, as visible in his nature, between man and man, of the noble and the common, the difference in his tastes, his enjoyments, his pleasures, his capacity no less than his power of enjoying, was a mere nothing then, to what it is to-day.

The servants, the very serfs, of aristocracy, in those days, when aristocracy was the rule of blood and bravery, were not, by a hundredth part, so far removed below the proudest of their lords, in every thing that renders humanity graceful and even glorious, in every thing that renders life enjoyable, as are, at this day, the workers fallen below the employers, when nobility has ceased to be, and aristocracy is the sway of capital, untinctured with intelligence, and ignorant of gentleness or grace.

It is not that the capitalist is richer, and the operative poorer—though this is true to the letter—than was the prince, than was the serf of those days. It is not only that the aristocrat of capital, the noble by the grace of gold, is ten times more arrogant, more insulting, more soulless, cold-hearted, and calmly cruel, than the aristocrat of the sword, the noble by the grace of God; and that the worker is worked more hardly, clad more humbly, fed more sparely, than the villain of the middle ages—though this, also, is true to the letter—but it *is*, that the very tastes, the enjoyments, and the capacities for enjoyment, in a word, almost the nature of the two classes are altered, estranged, unalterably divided.

The rich and great have, with a few rare exceptions that serve only to prove the rule, lost all taste for the simple, for the natural, for the beautiful, unless it be the beautiful of art and artifice; the poor and lowly have, for the most part, lost all taste, all perception of the beautiful, of the graceful, in any shape, all enjoyment of any thing beyond the tangible, the sensual, the real.

Hence a division, which never can be reconciled. Both classes have receded from the true nature of humanity, in the

two opposite directions, that they no longer even comprehend the one the tastes of the other, and scarce have a desire or a hope in common; for what the poor man most desires, a sufficiency for his mere wants, physical and moral, the rich man can not comprehend, never having known to be without it; while the artificial nothings, for which the capitalist strives and wrestles to the last, would be to his workman mere syllabub and flummery to the tired and hungry hunter.

In those days the enjoyments, and, in a great measure, the tastes, of all men were alike, from the highest to the lowest—the same sports pleased them, the same viands, for the most part, nourished, the same liquors enlivened them. Fresh meat was an unusual luxury to the noble, yet not an impossible indulgence to the lowest vassal; wine and beer were the daily, the sole, beverages of all, differing only, and that not very widely, in degree. The same love of flowers, processions, out-of-door amusements, dances on the greensward, suppers in the shade, were common to all, constantly enjoyed by all.

Now, it is certain, the enjoyments, the luxuries of the one class—nay, the very delicacy of their tables, if attainable, would be utterly distasteful to the other; and the rich soups, the delicate-made dishes, the savor of the game, and the purity of the light French and Rhenish wines, which are the *ne plus ultra* of the rich man's splendid board, would be even more distasteful to the man of the million, than would be his beans and bacon and fire-fraught whisky to the palate of the gaudy millionaire.

Throughout their progress, therefore, a thousand picturesque adventures befell our party, a thousand romantic scenes were presented by their halts for the noon-day repose, the coming

meal, or the nightly hour of rest, which never could now occur, unless to some pleasure-party, purposely masquerading, and aping the romance of other days.

Sometimes, when no convent, castle, hostelry, or hermitage, lay on the day's route, the harbingers would select some picturesque glen and sparkling fountain; and, when the party halted at the spot, an extempore pavilion would be found pitched, of flags and pennoncelles, outspread on a lattice-work of lances, with war-cloaks spread for cushions, and flasks and *bottiaus* cooling in the spring, and pasties and boar's meat, venison and game, plates of silver and goblets of gold, spread on the grass, amid pewter-platters and drinking-cups of horn, a common feast for man and master, partaken with the same appetite, hallowed by the same grace, enlivened by the same minstrelsy and music, and enjoyed no less by the late-enfranchised serfs, than by the high-born nobles to whom they owed their freedom.

Sometimes, when it was known beforehand that they must encamp for the night in the greenwood, the pages and waiting-women would ride forward, in advance of the rest, with the foragers, the baggage, and a portion of the light-armed archery; and, when the shades of evening were falling, the welcome watch-setting of the mellow-winded bugles would bid the voyagers hail; and, as they opened some moon-lit grassy glade, they would behold green bowers of leafy branches, garlanded with wild roses and eglantine, and strewn with dry, soft moss, and fires sparkling bright amid the shadows, and spits turning before the blaze, and pots seething over it, suspended from the immemorial gipsy tripods. And then *the horses* would be unbridled, unladen, groomed, and pick-

eted, to feed on the rich forest herbage; and the evening meal would be spread, and the enlivening wine-cup would go round, and the forest chorus would be trolled, rendered doubly sweet by the soft notes of the girls, until the bugles breathed a soft good-night, and, the females of the party withdrawing to their bowers of verdure, meet tiring rooms for Oberon and his wild Titania, the men, from the haughty baron to the humblest groom, would fold them in their cloaks, and sleep, with their feet to the watch-fires, and their untented brows toward heaven, until the woodlark, and the merle and mavis, earlier even than the village chanticleer, sounded their forest reveillé.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PROGRESS.

"Great mountains on his right hand,
Both does and roes, dun and red,
And harts aye casting up the head.
Bucks that brays and harts that hailes,
And hindes running into the fields,
And he saw neither rich nor poor,
But moss and ling and bare wild moor."

SIR EGER, SIR GREYSTEEL, AND SIR GRYME.

IN this life there was much of that peculiar charm which seems to pervade all mankind, of whatever class or country, and in whatever hemisphere; which irresistibly impels him to return to his, perhaps, original and primitive state, as a nomadic being, a rover of the forest and the plain; which, while it often seduces the refined and civilized man of cities to reject all the conveniences and luxuries of polite life, for the excitement and freshness, the inartificial liberty and self-confiding independence of semi-barbarism, has never been known to allow the native savage to renounce his freeborn instincts, or to abandon his natural and truant disposition, for all the advantage, all the powers, conferred by civilization.

And if, even to the freeborn and lofty-minded noble, the careless, unconventional, equalizing life of the forest was felt as *giving* a stronger pulsation to the free heart, a wider expan-

sion to the lungs, a deeper sense of freedom and power, how must not the same influences have been enjoyed by those, who now, for the first time since they were born, tasted that mysterious thing, liberty—of which they had so often dreamed, for which they had longed so wistfully, and of which they had formed, indeed, so indefinite an idea—for it is one of the particulars in the very essence of liberty, as it is, perhaps, of that kindred gift of God, health, that although all men talk of it as thing well understood and perfectly appreciated, not one man in ten understands or appreciates it in the least, unless he has once enjoyed it, and then been deprived of its possession.

It is true that, personally, neither Kenric nor Edith had ever known what it is to be free; but they came of a free, nay! even of an educated stock, and, being children of that Northern blood, which never has long brooked even the suspicion of slavery, and, in some sort, of the same race with their conquerors and masters, they had never ceased to feel the consciousness of inalienable rights; the galling sense of injustice done them, of humiliating degradation inflicted on them, by their unnatural position among, but not of, their fellows; had never ceased to hope, to pray, and to labor for a restitution to those self-existing and immutable rights—the rights, I mean, of living for himself, laboring for himself, acquiring for himself, holding for himself, thinking, judging, acting for himself, pleasing and governing himself, so long as he trench not on the self-same right of others—to which the meanest man that is born of a woman is entitled, from the instant when he is born into the world, as the heir of God and nature.

The Saxon serf was, it is true, a being fallen, debased, par-

tially brutalized, deprived of half the natural qualities of manhood, by the state of slavery, ignorance, and imbecility, into which he had been deforced, and in which he was willfully detained by his masters; but he had not yet become so utterly degraded, so far depressed below the lowest attributes of humanity, as to acquiesce in his own debasement, much less to rejoice in his bondage for the sake of the flesh-pots of Egypt, or to glory in his chains, and honor the name of master.

From this misery, from this last perversion and profanation of the human intellect divine—the being content to be a slave—the Saxon serf had escaped thus far; and, thanks to the great God of nature, of revelation, that last curse, that last profanation, he escaped forever. His body the task-master had enslaved; his intellect he had emasculated, debased, shaken, but he had not killed it; for there, there, amid the dust and ashes of the all-but-extinguished fire, there lurked alive, ready to be enkindled by a passing breath into a devouring flame, the sacred spark of liberty.

Ever hoping, ever struggling to be free, when the day dawned of freedom, the Saxon slave was fit to be free, and became free, with no fierce outbreak of servile rage and vengeance, consequent on servile emancipation, but with the calm although enthusiastical gladness which fitted him to become a freeman, a citizen, and, as he is, the master of one half of the round world. It is not, ah! it is not the chain, it is not the lash, it is not the daily toil, it is not the disruption of domestic ties and affections, that prove, that constitute the sin, the sorrow, and the shameful reproach of slavery.

Ah! no. But it is the very converse of these—the very point insisted on so complacently, proclaimed so triumphantly,

by the advocates of this accursed thing—it is that, in spite of the chain, in spite of the lash, in spite of the enforced labor, in spite of the absence or disruption of family ties and affections, the slave is sleek, satisfied, self-content; that he waxes fat among the flesh-pots; that he comes fawning to the smooth words, and frolics, delighted, fresh from the lash of his master, in no wise superior to the spaniel, either in aspiration or in instinct. It is in that he envies not the free man his freedom, but, in his hideous lack of all self-knowledge, self-reliance, self-respect, is content to be a slave, content to eat, and grow fat and die, without a present concern beyond the avoidance of corporeal pain and the enjoyment of sensual pleasure, without an aspiration for the future, beyond those of the beasts, which graze and perish.

It is in this that lies the mortal sin, the never-dying reproach, of him who would foster, would preserve, would propagate, the curse of slavery; not that he is a tyrant over the body, but that he is a destroyer of the soul—that he would continue a state of things which reduces a human being, a fellow-man, whether of an inferior race or no—for, as of congenerous cattle there are many distinct tribes, so of men, and of Caucasian men too, there be many races, distinct in physical, in moral, in animal, in intellectual qualities, as well as in color and conformation, if not distinct in origin—to the level of the beast which knoweth not whence he cometh or whither he goeth, nor what is to him for good, or what for evil, which hopes not to rise or to advance, either here or hereafter, but toils day after day, contented with his daily food, and lies down to sleep, and rises up to labor and to feed, as if God had created man with no higher purpose than to

sleep and eat alternately, until the night cometh from which, on earth, there shall be no awakening.

But of this misery the Saxon serf was exempt: and, to do him justice, of this reproach was the Norman conqueror exempt also. Of the use of arms, and the knowledge of warfare, he indeed deprived his serfs, for as they outnumbered him by thousands in the field, equalled him in resolution, perhaps excelled him in physical strength, to grant such knowledge would have been to commit immediate suicide—but of no other knowledge, least of all of the knowledge that leads to immortality, did he strive to debar him. Admittance to holy orders was patent to the lowest Saxon, and in those days the cloister was the gate to all knowledge sacred or profane, to all arts, all letters, all refinements, and above all to that knowledge which is the greatest power—the knowledge of dealing with the human heart, to govern it—the knowledge, which so often set the hempen sandal of the Saxon monk upon the mailed neck of the Norman king, and which, in the very reign of which I write, had raised a low-born man of the common Saxon race to be Archbishop of Canterbury, the keeper of the conscience of the king, the primate, and for a time the very ruler of the realm.

Often, indeed, did the superior knowledge of the cowled Saxon avenge on his masters the wrongs of his enslaved brethren; and while the learned priesthood of the realm were the brethren of its most abject slaves, no danger that those slaves should ever become wholly ignorant, hopeless, or degraded—and so it was seen in the end; for that very knowledge which it was permitted to the servile race to gain, while it taught them to cherish and fitted them to deserve freedom,

in the end won it for them; at the expense of no floods of noble blood, through the sordure and soil of no savage Saturnalia, such as marked the emancipation alike of the white serfs of revolutionized France, and the black slaves of disenthralled St. Domingo.

And so it was seen in the deportment of Kenric the serf, and of the slave girl Edith, even in these first days of their newly-acquired freedom.

Self-respect they had never lost altogether; and their increased sense of it was shown in the increased gravity and calmness and becomingness of their deportment.

Slaves may be merry, or they may be sullen. But they can not be thoughtful, or calm, or careworn. The French, while they were feudal slaves, before the Revolution, were the blithest, the most thoughtless, the merriest, and most frolicsome, of mortals; they had no morrows for which to take care, no liberties which to study, no rights which to guard. The English peasant was then, as the French is fast becoming now, grave rather than frivolous, a thinker more than a fiddler, a doer very much more than a dancer. Was he, is he, the less happy, the less respectable, the lower in the scale of intellect, that he is the farther from the monkey, and the nearer to the man?

The merriment, the riotous glee, the absolute abandonment of the plantation African to the humor, the glee of the moment, is unapproached by any thing known of human mirthfulness.

The gravity, the concentrated thought, the stern abstractedness, the careworn aspect of the free American is proverbial —the first thing observable in him by foreigners. He has

more to guard, more at which to aspire, more on which he prides himself, at times almost boastfully, more for which to respect himself, at times almost to the contempt of others, than any mortal man, his co-equal, under any other form of government, on any other soil. Is he the less happy for his cares, or would he change them for the recklessness of the well-clad, well-fed slave—for the thoughtlessness of the first subject in a despotic kingdom?

Kenric had been always a thinker, though a serf; his elder brother had been a monk, a man of strong sense and some attainment; his mother had been the daughter of one who had known, if he had lost, freedom. With his mother's milk he had imbibed the love of freedom; from his brother's love and teachings he had learned what a freeman should be; by his own passionate and energetic will he had determined to become free. He would have become so ere long, had not accident anticipated his resolve; for he had laid by, already, from the earnings of his leisure hours, above one half of the price whereby to purchase liberty. He was now even more thoughtful and calmer; but his step was freer, his carriage bolder, his head was erect. He was neither afraid to look a freeman in the eye, nor to render meet deference to his superior. For the freeman ever knows, nor is ashamed to acknowledge, that while the equality of man in certain rights, which may be called, for lack of a better title, natural and political, is co-existent with himself, inalienable, indefeasible, immutable, and eternal, there is no such thing whatever, nor can ever be, as the equality of man in things social, more than there can be in personal strength, grace, or beauty, in the natural gifts of intellect, or in the development of wisdom.

Of him who boasts that he has no superior, it may almost be said that he has few inferiors.

Thereof Kenric—as he rode along with his harness on his back, and his weapons in his hand, a freeman among freemen, a feudal retainer among the retainers, some Norman, some Saxon, of his noble lord—was neither louder, nor noisier, nor more exultant, perhaps the reverse, than his wont, though happier far than he had conceived it possible for him to be.

And by his bearing, his comrades and fellows judged him, and ruled their own bearing toward him. The Saxons of the company naturally rejoiced to see their countryman free by his own merit, and, seeing him in all things their equal, gladly admitted him to be so. The haughtier Normans, seeing that he bore his bettered fortunes as became a man, ready for either fortune, admitted him as one who had won his freedom bravely, and wore it as if it had been his from his birth—they muttered beneath their thick mustaches, that he deserved to be a Norman.

Edith, on the contrary, young yet, and unusually handsome, who had been the pet of her own people, and the favorite of her princely masters, who had never undergone any severe labor, nor suffered any poignant sorrow, who knew nothing of the physical hardships of slavery, more than she did of the real and tangible blessings of liberty, had ever been as happy and playful as a kitten, and as tuneful as a bird among the branches.

But now her voice was silent of spontaneous song, subdued in conversation, full fraught with a suppressed deeper feeling. The very beauty of the fair face was changed, soberer, more

hopeful, farther seeing, full no longer of an earthly, but more with something of an angel light.

The spirit had spoken within her, the statue had learned that it had a soul.

And Guendolen had noted, yet not fully understood the change or its nature. More than once she had called her to her bridle-rein and conversed with her, and tried to draw her out, in vain. At last, she put the question frankly—

"You are quieter, Edith, calmer, sadder, it seems to me," she said, "than I have ever seen you, since I first came to Waltheofstow. I have done all that lies in me to make you happy, and I should be sorry that you were sad or discontented."

"Sad, discontented! Oh! no, lady, no!" she replied, smiling among her tears. "Only too happy—too happy, to be loud or joyous. All happiest things, I think, have a touch of melancholy in them. Do you think, lady, yonder little stream," pointing to one which wound along by the roadside, now dancing over shelvy rapids, now sleeping in silent eddies, "is less happy where it lies calm and quiet, reflecting heaven's face from its deep bosom, and smiling with its hundred tranquil dimples, than where it frolics and sings among the pebbles, or leaps over the rocks which toss it into noisy foam-wreaths? No! lady, no. There it gathers its merriment and its motion, from the mere force of outward causes; here it collects itself from the depth of its own heart, and manifests its joy and love, and thanks God in silence. It is so with me, Lady Guendolen. My heart is too full for music, but not too shallow to reflect boundless love and gratitude forever."

The lady smiled, and made some slight reply, but she was

satisfied; for it was evident that the girl's poetry and gratitude both came direct from her heart; and in the smile of the noble demoiselle there was a touch of half-satiric triumph, as she turned her quick glance to Sir Yvo, who had heard all that passed, and asked him, slyly, "And do you, indeed, think, gentle father, that these Saxons are so hopelessly inferior, that they are fitting for nothing but mere toil; or is this the mere inspiration that springs from the sense of freedom?"

"I think, indeed," he replied, "that my little Guendolen is but a spoiled child at the best; and, as to my thoughts in regard to the Saxons, them I shall best consult my peace of mind and pocket by keeping my own property; since, by our Lady's Grace! you may take it into your head to have all the serfs in the north emancipated; and that is a little beyond my powers of purchase. But see, Guendolen, see how the sunbeams glint and glitter yonder on the old tower of Barden, and how redly it stands out from those purple clouds which loom so dark and thunderous over the peaceful woods of Bolton. Give your jennet her head, girl, and let her canter over these fair meadows, that we may reach the abbey and taste the noble prior's hospitality before the thunder gust is upon us."

And quickening its pace, the long train wound its way upward, by the bright waters of the beautiful Wharfe, and speedily obtained the shelter, and the welcome they expected from the good and generous monks of Bolton, the noblest abbaye in the loveliest dale of all the broad West Riding.

The next morning found them traversing the broken green country that lies about the head of the romantic Eyre, and

threading the wild passes of Ribbledale, beneath the shadow of the misty peaks of Pennigant and Ingleborough, swathed constantly in volumed vapor, whence the clanging cry of the eagle, as he wheeled far beyond the ken of mortal eyes, came to the ears of the voyagers, on whom he looked securely down as he rode the storm.

That night, no castle or abbey, no village even, with its humble hostelry, being, in those days, to be found among those wild fells and deep valleys, bowers were built of the materials with which the hillsides were plentifully feathered throughout that sylvan and mountainous district, of which the old proverbial distich holds good to this very day:

> "O! the oak, the ash, and the bonny ivy tree,
> They flourish best at home in the north countree."

Young sprouts of the juniper, soft ferns, and the delicious purple heather, now in its most luxurious flush of summer bloom and perfume, furnished agreeable and elastic couches; and, as the stores carried by the sumpter mules had been replenished by the large hospitality of the prior of Bolton, heronshaw and egret, partridge and moorgame, wildfowl and venison, furnished forth their board, with pasties of carp and eels, and potted trout and char from the lakes whither they were wending, and they fared most like crowned heads within the precincts of a royal city, there, under the shadow of the gray crags and bare storm-beaten brow of bleak Whernside, there where, in this nineteenth century, the belated wayfarer would deem himself thrice happy, if he secured the rudest supper of oat-cakes and skim-milk cheese, with a draught of thin ale, the luxuries of the hardy agricultural population of the dales.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NEW HOME.

"Sweetly blows the haw and the rowan-tree,
Wild roses speck our thickets sae briery;
Still, still will our walk in the green-wood be—
Oh, Jeanie! there's nothing to fear ye."

HOGG'S BALLADS.

ON the following morning they entered Westmoreland; and as they approached the term of their journey, advancing the more rapidly as they entered the wilder and more sparsely-populated regions toward the lakes and fells, where the castellated dwellings of the knightly nobles and the cloisters of the ecclesiastical lords became few and far between, they reached Kendal, then a small hamlet, with a noble castle and small priory, before noon; and, making no stay, pressed onward to the shores of Windermere, which they struck, not far from the scattered cottages and small chapel of ease, tended by two aged brothers from Kendal, known then, as it is now, not having grown much since that day, as the village of Bowness.

On the lake, moored at a rude pier, lay a small but gayly-decorated yacht, or galley, with the arms of Sir Yvo de Taillebois emblazoned on its foresail, and a gay streamer flaunting from its topmast, awaiting the arrival of the party, which had

been announced to their vassals by a harbinger sent forward from Bolton Abbey.

And here the nobles, with their immediate train, separated from the bulk of the party, the former going on board the galley, and crossing the pellucid waters of the beautiful lake to Sir Yvo's noble castle, which lay not a mile from the strand, embosomed in a noble chase, richly-wooded with superb oak and ash forests, midway of the gentle and green valley between the lake and the western mountains, over which his demesnes extended, while the escort, with the horse-boys, grooms, and servitors, took the longer and more difficult way around the head of the lake—a circuit of some twenty miles—over the sites of the modern towns of Ambleside and Hawkshead, the castle lying in Cumberland, although the large estates of De Taillebois extended for many miles on both sides the water, and in both counties, being the last grand feudal demesne on the south side of the mountains.

Further to the north, again, where the country spread out into plains beyond Keswick, toward Penrith and Carlisle, and the untamed Scottish borders, there were again found vast feudal demesnes, the property of the Lords of the Marches, the Howards, the Percys, the Umfravilles, and others, whose prowess defended the rich lowlands of York and Lancaster from the incursions of the Border Riders.

To the north, the nearest neighbor of De Taillebois was the Threlkeld, of Threlkeld Castle, on the skirts of Keswick, at thirty miles or more of distance across the pathless mountains of Sca-fell, Hellvellyn, Saddleback, and Skiddaw. Nigher to him, on the south, and adjoining his lands, lay the estates of the Abbots of Furness; and to the westward, beyond the

wide range of moor and mountain, which it took his party two days to traverse, and in which, from Bolton till they reached Kendal, they had seen, according to the words of the motto prefixed to this chapter,

> ——— "neither rich, nor poor,
> But moss, and ling, and bare wild moor,"

lay the lands of the Cliffords and the mighty Nevilles. All the inner country, among those glorious peaks, those deep glens, encumbered with old unshorn woods, those blue waters, undisturbed by the presence of a foreigner, since the eagles of the ubiquitous Roman glittered above his camps on the stern hill-sides, over that most unprofitable of his conquests, was virgin ground, uninhabited, save by fugitive serfs, criminal refugees from justice, and some wild families of liberty-loving Saxons, who had fled to the mountains, living by the strong hand and the bended bow, and content to sacrifice all else for the priceless boon of freedom.

It was, perhaps, the very wildness and solitude of the locality, as much as the exquisite charm of the loveliest scenery in England, to which, strange to say, he was fully alive—enhanced by the certainty that in those remote regions, where there were no royal forests, nor any territorial magnates who could in any way rival himself, his forest rights, of which every Norman was constitutionally jealous, were perfectly intangible and unassailable—which had so much attached Sir Yvo de Taillebois to his Cumbrian castle of High Furness, in preference to all his fair estates and castles in the softer and more cultivated portions of the realm.

Certain it is, that he did love it better than all his other

lands united; and hither he resorted, whenever he could escape from the duties of camps and the restraint of courts, to live a life among his vassals, his feudal tenants, and his humbler villagers, more like that of an Oriental patriarch than of a Norman warrior, but for the feudal pomp which graced his castle halls, and swelled his mountain hunts into a mimicry of warfare.

At about ten miles distant across the lake, up toward the lower spurs of the north-eastern mountains, lies the small lake of Kentmere, the head-waters and almost the spring of the river Kent; which, flowing down southward through the vale of Kendal, falls into the western head of Morecambe Bay, having its embouchure guarded by the terrible sands of Lancaster, so fatal to foot-passengers, owing to the terrific influx of the entering tides.

Set like a gem of purest water in a rough frame of savage mountains, their lower sides mantled with rich deciduous woods, their purple heathery brows dotted with huge Scotch firs, single, or in romantic groups, their scalps bald and broken, of gray and schistous rock, Kentmere fills up the whole basin of the dell it occupies, with the exception of a verge of smooth, green meadow-land, never above a hundred or two of yards in width, margined with a silvery stripe of snow-white sand, and studded by a few noble oaks.

At the head of the lake, half encircled by the dancing brook which formed its only inlet, rose a soft swell of ground, smooth and round-headed, neither hill nor hillock; its southern face, toward the lake, cleared of wood, and covered with short, close greensward, its flanks and brow overgrown with luxuriant oak-wood of the second growth, interspersed with var-

nished hollies, silver-stemmed birches, and a score or two of gigantic fir-trees, overtopping the pale green foliage of the coppice, and contrasting its lightsome tints by their almost sable hue.

Behind this fairy knoll the hill rose in rifted perpendicular faces of rock, garlanded and crowned with hanging coppices, for two or three hundred feet in height; the nesting-place of noble falcons, peregrines, gosshawks, haggards of the rock, and of a single pair of golden eagles, the terror of the dale from time immemorial.

In all lake land, there is no lovelier spot than Kentmere. The deep meadows by its side in early spring are one glowing garden of many-colored crocuses, golden, white, purple lady-smocks, yellow king-cups, and all sweet and gay-garbed flowers that love the water-side; the rounded knoll and all the oak-wood sides are alive with saffron primroses, cowslips, and meadow-sweets; and the air is rife with the perfume of unnumbered violets, and vocal with the song of countless warblers.

And on the mid slope of that rounded, bosomlike swell of land, there stood, at the period of my tale, a low stone building of one story, long for its height, narrow, and massively built of blocks of the native gray stone of the hills, with a projecting roof of heavy flags, forming a porch over the door, and two chimneys, one at either end, of a form peculiar, to this day, to that district, each covered with a flat stone slab supported on four columns, to prevent the smoke from driving down into the chambers, under the influence of the whirling gusts from the mountain tops.

Glass windows were unknown in those days, save to the

castellated mansions of the great, or the noble minsters and cathedrals of the great cities—the art having been first introduced, after the commencement of the dark ages, in the reign of Edward the Confessor, although it must have been well known and of common occurrence in England during its occupation by the Romans, who used glass for windows as well as implements so early as the time of Cicero, and who would seem to have brought its manufacture to a perfection unattainable by us moderns, since it is credibly asserted that they had the art to render it malleable. Horn and talc, or oiled parchment, were used by the middle classes, but this was a luxury confined to the dwellers in towns; and the square mullioned apertures, which here served for windows, were closed by day and in fine weather by slender lattices, and during storms or at night by wooden shutters. The want of these luxuries, however, being unknown, was unregarded; and the verdurer's house at Kentmere was regarded in those days as a fine specimen of rural architecture, and stood as high by comparison as many an esquire's hall of the present day.

For the rest, it was partly overrun with ivy and woodbine, and was overhung at the western end by a noble mountain-ash, from under the roots of which welled out a small crystal spring, and sheltered to the east by a group of picturesque Scotch firs. An out-building or two, a stone barn, a cow-house, and what, by the baying and din of hounds, was clearly a dog-kennel, stood a little way aloof, under the skirts of the coppice, and completed the appurtenances of what was then deemed a very perfect dwelling for a small rural proprietor, and would be held now a very tolerable mountain farm-house for a tenant cotter.

This was the new home of Kenric and Edith, now by the good offices of the old curate of Bowness made man and wife; and here, with the good old mother nodding and knitting by the hearth, and two stout boys, Kenric's varlets, to tend the hounds and hawks, and to do the offices of the small hill farm, they dwelt as happy as the day; he occupying the responsible position of head-forester of upper Kentdale, and warder of the cotters, shepherds, and verdurers, whose cottages were scattered in the woods and over the hill-sides, and both secure in the favor of their lovely lady, and proud of the confidence of their lord.

CHAPTER XV.

THE OLD HOME.

"Your knight for his lady pricks forth in career,
And is brought home at even-song, pricked through with a spear."
IVANHOE.

THAT was a dark day for Eadwulf, on which the train of Sir Yvo de Taillebois departed from the tower of Waltheofstow; and thenceforth the discontented, dark-spirited man became darker, more morose and gloomy, until his temper had got to such a pass that he was shunned and avoided by every one, even of his own fellows.

It is true, that in the condition of slavery, in the being one of a despised and a detested caste, in being compelled to labor for the benefit of others than himself, in the being liable at any moment to be sold, together with the glebe to which he is attached for life, like the ox or ass with which he toils as a companion, there is not much to promote contentedness, to foster a quiet, placable, and gentle disposition, to render any man more just, or grateful, or forbearing to his fellows. Least of all is it so, where there is in the slave just enough of knowledge, of civilization, of higher nurture, to enable him to desire freedom in the abstract, to pine for it as a right denied, and to hate those by whom he is deprived of it, without

comprehending its real value, or in the least appreciating either the privileges which it confers or the duties which it imposes on the freeman—least of all, when the man has from nature received a churlish, gloomy, sullen temperament, such as would be likely to make to itself a fanciful adversity out of actual prosperity, to resent all opposition to its slightest wish as an injury, and to envy, almost to the length of hating, every one more fortunate than himself.

It may, however, as all other conditions of inferiority, of sorrow, or of suffering, be rendered lighter and more tolerable by the mode of bearing it. Not that one would desire to see any man, whether reduced by circumstances to that condition, or held to it from his birth, so far reduced to a tame and senseless submission as to accept it as his natural state, or to endure it apathetically, without an effort at raising himself to his proper position in the scale of humanity and nature.

It is perfectly consistent with the utmost abhorrence of the condition, and the most thorough determination to escape from it by any means lawful to a Christian, to endure what is unavoidable, and to do that which must be done, bravely, patiently, well, and therefore nobly.

But it was not in the nature of Eadwulf to take either part. His rugged, stubborn, animal character, was as little capable of forming any scheme for his own prospective liberation, to which energy, and a firm, far-reaching will, should be the agents, as it was either to endure patiently or to labor well.

Perpetually remiss, working reluctantly and badly, ever a recusant, a recreant, a sullen and morose grumbler, while he in no respect lightened, but, it is probable, rather enhanced his difficulties, he detracted from what slight hope there

might exist of his future emancipation, by carefully, as it would seem, conciliating the ill-opinion and ill-will of all men, whether his equals or his superiors—while he entirely neglected to earn or amass such small sums as might be within his reach, and as might perhaps, in the end, suffice to purchase his liberation.

So long as Kenric and his mother remained in the hamlet of Waltheofstow, and he was permitted to associate with them in their quarter, in consequence of the character for patience, honesty, fidelity, and good conduct, which his brother had acquired with his masters, Eadwulf's temper had been in some sort restrained by the influence, unconfessed indeed, and only half-endured with sullen reluctance, which that brother obtained over him, through his clearer and stronger intellect. But when they had departed, and when he found himself ejected, as a single man in the first place, and yet more as one marked for a bad servant and a dangerous character, from the best cottage in the quarter, to which he had begun to fancy himself of right entitled, he became worse and worse, until, even in the sort of barrack or general lodging of the male slaves of the lowest order, he was regarded by his fellows as the bad spirit of the set, and was never sought by any, unless as the ringleader in some act of villainy, wickedness, or rebellion.

It is probable, moreover, that the beauty and innocence of Edith, who, however averse she might be to the temper and disposition of the man, had been wont, since her betrothal to his brother, to treat him with a certain friendship and familiarity, might have had some influence in modifying his manner, at least, and curbing the natural display of his passionate yet *sullen* disposition.

Certain it is, that in some sort he loved her—as much, perhaps, as his sensual and unintelligent soul would allow him to love; and though he never had shown any predilection, never had made any effort to conciliate her favor, nor dared to attempt any rivalry of his brother, whom he wholly feared, and half-hated for his assumed superiority, he sorely felt her absence, regretted her liberation from slavery, and even felt aggrieved at it, since he could not share her new condition.

His brother's freedom he resented as a positive injury done to himself; and his bearing away with him the beautiful Edith, soon to become his bride, he looked on in the light of a fraudulent or forcible abstraction of his own property. From that moment, he became utterly brutalized and bad; he was constantly ordered for punishment, and at length he got to such a pitch of idleness, insolence, and rebellion, that Sir Philip de Morville, though, in his reluctance to resort to corporeal punishment, he would not allow him to be scourged or set in the stocks, ordered his seneschal to take steps for selling him to some merchant, who would undertake to transport him to one of the English colonies in Ireland.

Circumstances, however, occurred, which changed the fate both of the master and the slave, and led in the end to the events, which form the most striking portion of the present narrative.

For some time past, as was known throughout all the region, Sir Philip de Morville had been, if not actually at feud, at least on terms of open enmity with the nobleman whose lands marched with his own on the forest side, Sir Foulke d'Oilly—a man well-advanced in years, most of which he had spent in constant marauding warfare, a hated oppressor and

tyrant to his tenantry and vassals, and regarded, among his Norman neighbors and comrades, as an unprincipled, discourteous, and cruel man.

With this man, recently, fresh difficulties had arisen concerning some disputed rights of chase, and on a certain day, within a month after the departure of Sir Yvo de Taillebois, the two nobles, meeting on the debatable ground, while in pursuit of the chase, under very aggravating circumstances, the hounds of both parties having fallen on the scent of the same stag, high words passed—a few arrows were shot by the retainers on both sides, Sir Philip's being much the more numerous; a forester of Sir Foulke d'Oilly's train was slain; and, had it not been for the extreme forbearance of De Morville, a conflict would have ensued, which could have terminated only in the total discomfiture of his rival and all his men.

This forbearance, however, effected no good end; for, before the barons parted, some words passed between them in private, which were not heard by any of their immediate followers, and the effect of which was known only by the consequences which soon ensued.

On the following morning, at the break of day, before the earliest of the serfs were summoned to their labors, the castle draw-bridge was lowered, and Sir Philip rode forth on his destrier, completely armed, but followed only by a single esquire in his ordinary attire.

The vizor of the knight's square-topped helmet was lowered, and the mail-hood drawn closely over it. His habergeon of glittering steel-rings, his mail-hose, fortified on the shoulders and at the knees by plates of polished steel, called poldrons

and splents, shone like silver through the twilight; his triangular shield hung about his neck, his great two-handed broad-sword from his left shoulder to his heel, and his long steel-headed lance was grasped in his right hand; none could doubt that he was riding forth to do battle, but it was strange that he wore no surcoat of arms over his plain mail, that no trumpet preceded, no banner was borne behind him, no retainers, save that one unarmed man, in his garb of peace, followed the bridle of their lord.

He rode away slowly down the hill, through the serf's quarter, into the wood; the warder from the turret saw him turn and gaze back wistfully toward his hereditary towers, perhaps half prescient that he should see them no more. He turned, and was lost to view; nor did any eye of his faithful vassals look on him in life again.

Noon came, and the dinner hour, but the knight came not to the banquet hall—evening fell, and there were no tidings; but, at nightfall, Eadwulf came in, pale, ghastly, and terrified, and announced that the knight and the esquire both lay dead with their horses in a glade of the wood, not far from the scene of the quarrel of the preceding day, on the banks of the river Idle. No time was lost. With torch and cresset, bow and spear, the household hurried, under their appointed officers, to the fatal spot, and soon found the tidings of the serf to be but too true.

The knight and his horse lay together, as they had fallen, both stricken down at the same instant, in full career as it would seem, by a sudden and instantaneous death-stroke. The warrior, though prostrate, still sat the horse as if in life; he was not unhelmed; his shield was still about his neck;

his lance was yet in the rest, the shaft unbroken, and the point unbloodied—the animal lay with its legs extended, as if it had been at full speed when the fatal stroke overtook it. A barbed clothyard arrow had been shot directly into its breast, piercing the heart through and through, by some one in full front of the animal; and a lance point had entered the throat of the rider, above the edge of the shield which hung about his neck, coming out between the shoulders behind, and inflicting a wound which must have been instantaneously mortal.

Investigation of the ground showed that many horses had been concealed or ambushed in a neighboring dingle, within easy arrow-shot of the murdered baron; that two horsemen had encountered him in the glade, one of whom, he by whose lance he had fallen, had charged him in full career.

It was evident to the men-at-arms, that Sir Philip's charger had been treacherously shot dead in full career, by an archer ambushed in the brake, at the very moment when he was encountering his enemy at the lance's point; and that, as the horse was in the act of falling, he had been bored through from above, before his own lance had touched the other rider.

The esquire had been cut down and hacked with many wounds of axes and two-handed swords, one of his arms being completely severed from the trunk, and his skull cleft asunder by a ghastly blow. His horse's brains had been dashed out with a mace, probably after the slaughter of the rider; and that this part of the deed of horror had been accomplished by many armed men, dismounted, and not by the slayer of De Morville, was evident, from the number of mailed and

booted footsteps deeply imprinted in the turf around the carcases of the murdered men and butchered animals.

Efforts were made immediately to track the assassins by the slot, several, both of the men-at-arms and of the Yorksire foresters, being expert at the art; but their skill was at fault, as well as the scent of the slow-hounds, which were laid on the trail; for, within a few hundred yards of the spot, the party had entered the channel of the river Idle, and probably followed its course upward, to a place where it flowed over a sheet of hard, slaty, rock; and where the land farther back consisted of a dry, sun-burned, upland waste, of short, summer-parched turf, which took no impression of the horses' hoofs.

There was no proof, nor any distinct circumstantial evidence; yet none doubted any more than if they had beheld the doing of the dastardly deed, that the good Lord de Morville had fallen by the hand of Sir Foulke d'Oilly and of his associates in blood-shedding.

For the rest, the good knight lay dead, leaving no child, wife, brother, nor any near relation, who should inherit either his honors or his lands. He had left neither testament nor next of kin. Literally, he had died, and made no sign.

The offices of the church were done duly, the masses were chanted over the dead, and the last remains of the good knight were consigned to dust in the chapel vaults of his ancestral castle, never to descend to posterity of his, or to bear his name again forever.

In a few days it was made known that Sir Philip had died deeply indebted to the Jews of York, of Tadcaster, even of London; that his estates, all of which were unentailed and in his own right, were heavily mortgaged; and that the lands

would be sold to satisfy the creditors of the deceased. Shortly after, it was whispered abroad, and soon proclaimed aloud, that Sir Foulke d'Oilly had become purchaser of whatever was saleable, and had been confirmed by the royal mandate in the possession of the seigneurial and feudal rights of the lapsed fief of Waltheofstow. There had been none to draw attention to the suspicions which weighed so heavily against Sir Foulke in the neighborhood, and among the followers of the dead knight; they were men of small rank and no influence, and had no motive to induce them wantonly to incur the hatred of the most powerful and unscrupulous noble of the vicinity, by bringing charges which they had no means to substantiate, if true, and which, to disprove, it was probable that he had contrivances already prepared by false witness.

Within a little while, Sir Foulke d'Oilly assumed his rights territorial and seigneurial; but he removed not in person to Waltheofstow, continuing to reside in his own larger and more magnificent castle of Fenton in the Forest, within a few miles' distance, and committing the whole management of his estates and governance of his serfs to a hard, stern, old man-at-arms, renowned for his cruel valor, whom he installed as the seneschal of the fief, with his brother acting as bailiff under him, and a handful of fierce, marauding, free companions, as a garrison to the castle.

The retainers of the old lord were got rid of peacefully, their dues of pay being made up to them, and themselves dismissed, with some small gratuity. One by one the free tenants threw up the farms which they rented, or resigned the fiefs which they held on man-service; and, before Sir Philip had been a month *cold in his grave*, not a soul was left in the place of its old in-

habitants, except the miserable Saxon serfs, to whom change of masters brought no change of place; and who, regarded as little better than mere brutes of burden, were scarce distinguished one from the other, or known by name, to their new and vicarious rulers. On them fell the most heavily the sudden blow which had deprived them of a just, a reasonable, and a merciful lord, as justice and mercy went in those days, and consigned them defenseless and helpless slaves, to one among the cruellest oppressors of that cruel and benighted period—and, worse yet than that, mere chattels at the mercy of an underling, crueller even than his lord, and wanting even in the sordid interest which the owner must needs feel in the physical welfare of his property.

Woe, indeed, woe worth the day, to the serfs of Waltheofstow, when they fell into the hands of Sir Foulke d'Oilly, and tasted of the mercies of his seneschal, Black Hugonet of Fenton in the Forest!

It was some considerable time before the news of this foul murder reached the ears of Sir Yvo de Taillebois; and when it did become known to him, and measures were taken by him to reclaim the manor of Waltheofstow, in virtue of the mortgage he had redeemed, it was found that so many prior claims, and that to so enormous an extent, were in existence, as to swallow up the whole of the estates, leaving Sir Yvo a loser of the nineteen thousand zecchins which he had advanced, with nothing to show in return for his outlay beyond the freedom of Kenric and his family.

The good knight, however, was too rich to be seriously affected by the circumstance, and of too noble and liberal a strain to regret deeply the mere loss of superabundant and

unnnecessary gold. But not so did he regard the death of his dear companion and brother in arms; yet, though he caused inquiries to be set on foot as to the mode of his decease, so many difficulties intervened, and the whole affair was plunged in so deep a mystery and obscurity, that he was compelled to abandon the pursuit reluctantly, until, after months had elapsed, unforeseen events opened an unexpected clew to the fatal truth.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ESCAPE.

Then said King Florentyne,
"What noise is this? 'Fore Saint Martyn,
Some man," he said, "in my franchise,
Hath slain my deer and bloweth the prize."

GUY OF WARWICK.

ONE of those serfs, Eadwulf, was little disposed to resign himself tranquilly to his fate; as within a short period after the occupation of Waltheofstow by the new seneschal, his wonted contumacy had brought him into wonted disgrace and condemnation, and, there being no longer any clemency overruling the law for the mitigation of such penalties as should seem needful, the culprit was on several occasions cruelly scourged, and imprisoned in the lowest vaults of the castle dungeon.

Maddened by this treatment, he at length resolved to escape at all risks, and knowing every path and dingle of the forest, he flattered himself that he should easily elude pursuers who were strange, as yet, to that portion of the country; and having, on the departure of his brother, contrived stealthily to possess himself of the crossbow and bolts which had belonged to him, being intrusted to his care as an unusual boon, owing to his good conduct and his occupation

as a sort of underkeeper in the chase, fancied that he shou be able easily to support himself by killing game in th forests through which he must make his way, until he should arrive at the new residence of that brother, where he doubted not of finding comfort and assistance.

During the days which had elapsed between the emancipation of Kenric and his departure from the castle, much had been ascertained, both by the new freeman and his beautiful betrothed, concerning the route which led to their future abode, its actual position, and the wild and savage nature of the country on which it abutted.

All this had naturally enough become known to Eadwulf; and he, having once been carried as far as to Lancaster by the late lord's equerry, to help in bringing home some recently-purchased war-horses, knew well the general direction of the route, and, having heard, while there, of the fordable nature of the Lancastrian sands, made little doubt of being able to find his way to his brother, and by his aid to gain the wild hills, where he trusted to subsist himself as a hunter and outlaw on the vast and untraversed heaths to the northward.

It was his hope to gain sufficient start, in the first instance, to enable him to make off so long before his absence should be discovered, that bloodhounds could not be laid on his track until the scent should be already cold; and then keeping the forest-ground, and avoiding all cleared or cultivated lands, to cross the Lancaster sands, and thence, by following up the course of the Kent River, on which he knew Kenric would be stationed as verdurer, to gain the interior labyrinth of fells, moors, morasses, and ravines, which at that time occupied the greater part of Westmoreland and Cumberland.

To this end, he managed to conceal himself at nightfall not far from the quarter, before the serfs had collected in their dormitory, intending to prosecute his flight so soon as the neighborhood should be steeped in the silence of night, and the moon should give him sufficient light to find his way through the deep forest mazes; and thus, before daybreak, was already some twenty miles distant from Waltheofstow, where he concealed himself in a deep hazel brake, intending to sleep away the hours of daylight, and resume his flight once more during the partial darkness of the night.

It was true that his route lay through the woodland-chase, which spread far and wide over the environs of Fenton in the Forest, and was the property of his new master; but for this he cared little, since there had been so small intercourse between the tenantry and vassals of his late lord and those of Sir Foulke D'Oilly, that he had no fears of being recognized by any chance retainer whom he might possibly encounter, while he knew that, should he chance to be discovered by a passing serf of his own oppressed race, he should not be betrayed by them to their mutual tyrants. Armed, therefore, at large, and already at a considerable distance from the scene of his captivity, he considered himself well-nigh safe when he concealed himself, in the early gray of the dawn, in such a dingle as he felt sure would secure him from the chance intrusion of any casual wayfarers.

Under one difficulty, however, he sorely labored. He had been unable to carry with him any provision, however slender; and he must depend on his skill as a forester for his sustenance, by poaching in the woods which he had to traverse, and cooking his game as best he might, borrowing an

hour or two of the darkness for the purpose, and kindling his fire in the most remote and obscure places, to avoid danger of the smoke being observed by day, or the glare of the fire by night.

He had lost his evening meal on the previous day, and the appetite of the Saxon peasant was proverbially mighty; while, as is ever the case with men who have no motives to self-restraint or economy, abstinence was an unknown power.

It was vastly to his joy, therefore, that when the sun was getting fairly above the horizon, after he had been himself lurking an hour or two in the thick covert, he saw among the branches a noble stag come picking his way daintily along a deer-path which skirted the dingle, accompanied by two slim and graceful does, evidently intending to lay up, during the day, in the very brake which he unwittingly had occupied.

He had no sooner espied the animal, which was coming down wind upon him, utterly unconscious of the proximity of his direst foe, then he crouched low among the fern, fitted a quarrel to the string of his arbalast, and waited until his game was within ten paces of his ambush.

Then the winch was released, the bow twanged, and the forked head of the ponderous bolt crashed through the brain of the noble stag. One great bound he made, covering six yards of forest soil in that last leap of the death agony, and then laid dead almost at the feet of his unseen destroyer. The terrified does fled in wild haste into the opener parts of the forest, and, in an instant, the keen wood-knife of the Saxon had pierced the throat of the deer, and selected such portions, carved from the still quivering carcase, as he could most easily carry with him. These thrust carefully

into the sort of hunting-pouch, or wallet, which he wore slung under his left arm, he proceeded, with the utmost wariness and caution, to cover up the slaughtered beast with boughs of the trees and brackens, rejoicing in his secret soul that he had secured to himself provision for two days longer at the least, and hoping that on the fourth morning he would be in security, beyond the broad expanse of Morecambe Bay.

But wonderfully deceitful are the hopes of the human heart; and, in the present instance, as often is the case, the very facts which he regarded as most auspicious were pregnant with the deepest danger.

Even where he had most warily calculated his chances, and chosen his measures with the deepest precaution, selecting the full of the moon for the period of his escape, and choosing the route in which he had anticipated the least danger of interruption, he had erred the most signally.

For it had so fallen out that Sir Foulke D'Oilly, having appointed this very day for a grand hunting match in his woods of Fenton, had issued orders to a strong party of his vassals, under the leading of Black Hugonet, his seneschal, and his brother, Ralph Wetheral, the bailiff, to come up from Waltheofstow by daybreak, and rendezvous at a station in the forest not a league distant from the spot in which Eadwulf had so unhappily chosen to conceal himself.

At the very moment in which the serf had launched his fatal bolt against the deer, the bailiff, Ralph Wetheral, who was, by virtue of his office, better acquainted with his person than any others of the household, was within a half a mile of his lair, engaged in tracking up the slot of the very animal which he was rejoicing to have slain, by aid of a mute lymer,

or slow-hound, of an especial breed, kept and trained for the purpose; and in furtherance of his pursuit, had dismounted from his horse, and was following the dog as he dragged him onward, tugging at the leash; while ten or fifteen of his companions were scattered through the woods behind him, beating them carefully, in order to track the stags or wild boars to their lairs, before the arrival of their lord.

It was, perhaps, half an hour after he had discharged the shot, when he was alarmed by a light rustling of the underwood and the cracking of dry sticks under a cautious footstep, and at first surmised that a second beast of chase was following on the track of his predecessor. But, in a moment, he was undeceived, by hearing the voice of a man whispering a few low words of encouragement to a dog, and at once the full extent of his danger flashed upon him. The dog was evidently questing the animal he had shot, and, within an instant, would lead his master to the spot. Under the cruel enactment of the Norman forest-laws, to slay a deer was a higher offense than to kill a fellow-man; the latter crime being in many cases remissible on the payment of a fine, while the former inevitably brought down on the culprit capital punishment, often enhanced by torture. To be found hidden, close behind a warm and yet bleeding stag, was tantamount to being taken red-handed in the fact, and instant death was the least punishment to be looked for.

Discovery was so close at hand, that flight itself seemed impossible; yet in immediate flight lay the sole chance of safety. He had already started from his lair, when the slow-hound, coming on the track of the fresh blood, set up a wild and savage yell, broke from the leash, and in a second was

standing over the slaughtered quarry, tearing away with his fangs and claws the bushes which covered the carcass.

At the same moment, the branches were parted, and the bailiff of Waltheofstow stood before the culprit, carrying an unbended long-bow in his hand, and having a score of cloth-yard arrows at his belt, a short anlace at his side, and his bugle slung about his neck.

The recognition on each side was immediate, and the Norman advanced fearlessly to seize the fugitive, raising his bugle to his lips, as he came on, to summon succor. But Eadwulf, who had already laid a quarrel in the groove of the cross-bow, with some indefinite idea of shooting the dog before the man should enter upon the scene, raised the weapon quickly to his shoulder, and, taking rapid aim, discharged it full at the breast of the bold intruder.

The heavy missile took effect, just as it was aimed, piercing the cavity of the man's heart, that he sprang a foot or better up into the air, and fell slain outright upon the body of the deer, which his dog had discovered, his spirit passing away without a struggle or a convulsion.

The dog uttered a long, melancholy, wailing howl, stooped to snuff at and lick the face of its murdered master, and then, as Eadwulf was drawing forth a third quarrel, before he could bend the arbalast again, or fit the missile to the string, fled howling into the wood whence he had come, as if he foresaw his purpose.

"A curse upon the yelling cur; he will bring the hue-and-cry down on me in no time. There is nothing but a run for it, and but a poor chance at that."

And, with the words, he dashed away toward the north-

west, through the opener parts of the forest, at a speed which, could he have maintained it, would have soon carried him out of the reach of pursuit. And wonderfully he did maintain it; for at the end of the second hour he had run nearly fifteen miles from the scene of the murder; and here, on the brink of a small brimful river, of perhaps forty or fifty yards in width, flowing tranquilly but rapidly through the green-woods, in a course not very much from the direction which he desired to follow, he cast himself down on the turf, and lay panting heavily for some minutes on the sward, until he had in some degree recovered his breath, when he bathed his face in the cool water, drank a few swallows, and then crossing the stream by some large stepping-stones which lay here in a shallow spot, continued his flight with singular speed and endurance.

He had not, however, fled above a hundred or two of yards beyond the water, when he heard, at the distance of about three miles behind him, the sound he most dreaded to hear the deep bay of bloodhounds. Beyond doubt, they were on his track; and how was he to shun their indomitable fury?

He was a man of some resource and skill in woodcraft, although rude and barbarous in other matters; and, in desperate emergencies, men think rapidly, and act on the first thought.

The second tone of the dogs had scarcely reached his ear, before he was rushing backward, as nearly as possible in his own tracks, to the river, into which, from the first stepping-stone, he leaped head-foremost, and swam vigorously and lightly down the current, which bore him bravely on his way. The stream was swift and strong; and its banks, clothed with

thick underwood, concealed his movements from the eyes of any one on either margin; and he had floated down considerably more than a mile, before he heard the bloodhounds come up in full cry to the spot where he had passed the water, and cross over it, cheered by the shouts and bugle-blasts of the man-hunters.

Then their deep clamor ceased at once, where he had turned on his back track, and he knew they were at fault, and perceived that the men, by their vociferations and bugle-notes, were casting them to and fro in all directions, to recover his scent.

Still he swam rapidly onward, and had interposed nearly another mile between himself and his pursuers, when he heard, by their shouts coming down either bank, that they had divined the stratagem to which he had had recourse, and were trailing him down the margins, secure of striking his track again, wherever he should leave the river.

He was again becoming very anxious, when a singular accident gave him another chance of safety. A wood-pigeon, flapping its wings violently as it took flight, attracted his attention to the tree from which it took wing. It was a huge oak, overhanging the stream, into which one of its branches actually dipped, sound and entire below, but with a large hollow at about twenty feet from the ground, which, as he easily divined, extended downward to the level of the soil. No sooner seen, than he had seized the pendulous branch, swung himself up by it, through a prodigious exertion, and, springing with mad haste from bough to bough, reached the opening in the decayed trunk. It was a grim, dark abyss, and, should he enter it, he saw not how he should ever make his

exit. But a nearer shout, and the sounds of galloping horsemen, decided him. He entered it foot-foremost, hung by his hands for a moment to the orifice, in hesitation, and then, relaxing his hold, dropped sheer down through the rotten wood, and spiders'-webs, and unhealthy funguses, to the bottom of the tunnel-shaped hollow. Aroused from their diurnal dreams by the crash of his descent, two great brown-owls rushed out of the summit of the tree, and swooped down over the heads of the men-at-arms, who just at the instant passed under the branches, jingling in their panoply, and effectually prevented any suspicion from attaching to the hiding-place.

For the moment he was safe; and there he stood, in almost total darkness, shivering with wet and cold, amid noisome smells and damp exhalations, listening to the shouts of his enemies, as they rode to and fro, until they were lost in the distance.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PURSUIT.

"Now tell me thy name, good fellow, said he,
Under the leaves of lyne.
Nay, by my faith, quoth bold Robin,
Till thou have told me thine."

ROBIN HOOD AND GUY OF GISBORNE.

UNTIL the last glimmer of daylight had faded out in the west, and total darkness had prevailed for several hours through the forest, Eadwulf remained a prisoner in his hollow trunk, unable to discover the whereabout of his enemies, yet well-assured that they had not returned, but had taken up some bivouac for the night, not very far in advance of his hiding-place, with the intention of again seeking for his trail on the morrow, when they judged that he would have once more taken the road. But as soon as, looking up the chimney-like aperture of his hiding-place, he discovered the foliage silvered by the moonbeams, he scaled the inside of the trunk, not without some difficulty, working his way upward with his back and knees, after the fashion of a modern chimney-sweep, and, emerging into the open air, drew a long breath, and again lowered himself, as he had ascended, by the drooping-branches, and once more entered the channel of the stream.

The rivulet was in this place shallow, with a hard botton current which was swift and noisy, scarce rising to his kn that he waded down it without much difficulty, and a tolerable speed.

After he had proceeded in this manner about two miles, discovered a red-light in an open glade of the forest, at a sh distance ahead, on the left bank of the river; and, as he cam abreast of it, readily discovered his enemies, with the blood hounds in their leashes, sitting or lying around a fire which they had kindled, ready, it was evident, to resume the search with the earliest dawn. This he was enabled to discern without quitting the bed of the stream, whose brawling ripples drowned the sound of his footsteps; and as the water deepened immediately ahead of him, he again plunged noiselessly, and swam forward at least two miles farther; when, calculating that he had given them a task of two or three hours at least before they could succeed in finding where he had quitted the water-course, if he had not entirely thrown them out, he took land on the opposite side to that, on which they were posted, and struck at his best pace across the waste.

It might have been ten o'clock in the evening when he left the oak-tree, and, though weary and hungry, he plodded forward at a steady pace, never falling short of four miles an hour, and often greatly exceeding that speed, where the ground favored his running, until perhaps an hour before daybreak. At that darkest moment of the night, after the moon had set, he paused in a little hollow of the hills, having placed, as he calculated, at least five-and-thirty miles between himself and his hunters, lighted a fire, cooked a portion of his venison, and again, just as the skies began to brighten, got

under way, supposing that at about this hour his foes would resume their search, and might probably in a couple of hours get the hounds again upon his scent. Ere that, however, he should have gained another ten miles on them, and he well knew that the scent would be so cold that it would be many hours more before they could hunt it up, if they should succeed in doing so at all.

All day, until the sun was high at noon, he strode onward across the barren heath and wild moors into which the forest had now subsided, when, after catching from a hill-top a distant view of a town and castle to the northward, which he rightly judged to be Skipton, he reached an immense tract, seeming almost interminable, of green, oozy morasses, cut up by rivulets and streamlets, and often intersected by dangerous bogs, from which flowed the interlinked tributaries of the Eyre, the Ribble, and the Hodder. Through this tract, he was well aware, neither horse could follow nor bloodhound track him; and it was overgrown in so many places with dense brakes of willow and alder, that his flight could not be discovered by the eye from any of the surrounding eminences. Into this dreary region he, therefore, plunged joyously, feeling half-secure, and purposely selecting the deepest and wettest portions of the bog, and, where he could do so without losing the true line of his course, wading along the water-courses until about two in the afternoon, when he reached an elevated spot or island in the marsh, covered with thrifty underwood, and there, having fed sparingly on the provision he had cooked on the last evening, made himself a bed in the heather, and slept undisturbed, and almost lethargically, until the moon was up in the skies. Then he again cooked and ate; but,

before resuming his journey, he climbed a small ash-t which overlooked the level swamp, and thence at once descr three watch-fires, blazing brilliantly at three several spots the circumference of the morass, one almost directly ahead him, and nearly at the spot where he proposed to issue on t the wild heathery moors of Bolland Forest, on the verge of th counties of York and Lancaster, and within fifty miles of the provincial capital and famous sands of the latter. By these fires he judged easily that thus far they had traced him, and found the spot where he had entered the bogs, the circuit of which they were skirting, in order once more to lay the death-hounds on his track, where ever he should again strike the firm ground.

In one hour after perceiving the position of his pursuers, he passed out of the marsh at about a mile north of the western-most watch-fire, and, in order as much as possible to baffle them, crawled for a couple of hundred yards up a shallow runnel of water, which drained down from the moorland into the miry bottom land.

Once more he had secured a start of six hours over the Normans, but with this disadvantage—that they would have little difficulty in finding his trail on the morrow, and that the country which he had to traverse was so open, that he dared not attempt to journey over it by daylight.

Forward he fared, therefore, though growing very weak and weary, for he was foot-sore and exhausted, and chilled with his long immersion in the waters, until the sun had been over the hills for about two hours, much longer than which he dared not trust himself on the moors, when he began to look about eagerly for some water-course or extensive bog, by which

he might again hope to avoid the scent of the unerring hounds.

None such appeared, however, and desperately he plodded onward, almost despairing and utterly exhausted, without a hope of escaping by speed of foot, and seeing no longer a hope of concealment. Suddenly when the sun was getting high, and he began to expect, at every moment, the sounds of the death-dogs opening behind him, he crossed the brow of a round-topped heathery hill, crested with crags of gray limestone, and from its brow, at some thirty miles distance, faintly discerned the glimmering expanse of Morecambe Bay, and the great fells of Westmoreland and Cumberland looming up like blue clouds beyond them.

But through the narrow ghyll, immediately at his feet, a brawling stream rushed noisily down the steep gorge from the north, southerly. Headlong he leaped down to it, through the tall heather, which here grew rank, and overtopped his head, but before he reached it, he blundered into a knot of six or seven men, sleeping on a bare spot of greensward, round the extinct ashes of a fire, and the carcass of a deer, which they had slain, and on which they had broken their fast.

Startled by his rapid and unceremonious intrusion into their circle, the men sprang to their feet with the speed of light, each laying a cloth-yard arrow to the string of a bended long-bow, bidding him "Stand, or die."

For a moment, he thought his hour was come; but the next glance reassured him, and he saw that his fortune had again brought him safety, in the place of ruin.

The men were Saxons, outlaws, fugitives from the Norman tyranny, and several of them, like himself, serfs escaped from

the cruelty of their masters. One of them had joined the party so recently, that, like Eadwulf, he yet wore the brass collar about his neck, the badge of servitude and easy mode of detection, of which he had not yet found the means to rid himself.

A few words sufficed to describe his piteous flight, and to win the sympathy and a promise of protection from the out-laws; but when the bloodhounds were named, and their probably close proximity, they declared with one voice that there was not a moment to be lost, and that they could shelter him without a possibility of danger.

Without farther words, one by one they entered the brook, scattering into it as if they were about to pass down it to the southward, but the moment their feet were in the water, turning upward and ascending the gorge, which grew wilder and steeper as they proceeded, until, at a mile's distance, they came to a great circular cove of rocks, walled in by crags of three hundred feet in height, with the little stream plunging down it, at the upward extremity, small in volume, but sprinkling the staircase of rocks, down which it foamed, with incessant sheets of spray.

Scarcely had they turned the projecting shoulder of rock which guarded the entrance of this stern circle, before the distant bay of the bloodhounds came heavily down the air; and, at the same instant, the armed party galloped over the brow of the bare moor which Eadwulf had passed so recently, cheering the fierce dogs to fresh exertions, and expecting, so hotly did their sagacious guides press upon the recent trail, to see the fugitive fairly before them.

Much to their wonder, however, though the country lay

before their eyes perfectly open, in a long stretch of five or six miles, without a bush, a brake, or apparently a hollow which could conceal a man if he were in motion, he was not to be discovered within the limits of the horizon.

"By St. Paul!" exclaimed the foremost rider; shading his eyes with his hand, to screen them from the rays of the level sun, "he can not have gained so much on us as to have got already beyond the range of eyeshot He must have laid up in the heather. At all events, we are sure of him. Forward! forward! Halloo! hark, forward!"

Animated by his cheering cry, the dogs dashed onward furiously, reached the brink of the rill, and were again at fault. "Ha! he is at his old tricks again;" shouted the leader, who was no other than Hugonet, surnamed the Black, the brother of the murdered bailiff. "But it shall not avail him. We will beat the brook on both banks, up and down, to its source and to its mouth, if it needs, but we will have him. You, Wetherall, follow it northerly to the hills with six spears and three couple of the hounds. I will ride down toward the sea; I fancy that will prove to be the line he has taken. If they hit off the scent, or you catch a view of him, blow me five mots upon your bugle, thus, *sa-sa-wa-la-roa!* and, lo! in good time, here comes Sir Foulke."

And thundering up on his huge Norman war-horse, cursing furiously when he perceived that the hounds were at fault, came that formidable baron; for his enormous weight had kept him far in the rear of his lighter-armed, and less ponderous vassals. His presence stimulated them to fresh exertions, but all exertions were in vain.

Evening fell on the wide purple moorlands, and they had

found no track of him they sought. Wetherall, after making a long sweep around the cove and the waterfall, and tracing back the rill to its source, in a mossy cairn among the hills, at some five miles' distance, descended it again and rejoined the party, with the positive assurance that the serf had not gone in that direction, for that the hounds had beaten both banks the whole way to the spring-head, and that he had not come out on either side, or their keen scent would have detected him.

Meantime, the other party had pursued the windings of the stream downward, with the rest of the pack, for more than ten miles, at full gallop, until they were convinced that had he gone in that direction, they must long ere this have overtaken him. They were already returning, when they were met by Wetherall, the bearer of no more favorable tidings.

Sorely perplexed how their victim should have thus vanished from them, in the midst of a bare open moor, as if he had been swallowed up by the earth, *aut tenues evasit in auras*, and half suspecting witchcraft, or magic agency, they lighted fires, and encamped on the spot where they had lost his track, intending to resume the research on the morrow, and, at last, if the latest effort should fail of recovering the scent, to scatter over the moors, in small parties or troops, and beat them toward the Lancaster sands, by which they were well-assured, he meditated his escape.

In the interval, the band of outlaws quickening their pace as they heard the cry of the bloodhounds freshening behind them, arrived at the basin, into which fell the scattered rain of the mimic cataract, taking especial care to set no foot

on the moss or sand, by the brink, which should betray them to the instinct of the ravening hounds.

"Up with thee, Wolfric," cried one of the men to one who seemed the chief. "Up with thee! There is no time to lose. We must swear him when we have entered the cave. Forward comrade; this way lies your safety." And, with the words, he pointed up the slippery chasm of the waterfall.

Up this perilous ladder, one by one, where to an unpracticed eye no ascent appeared possible, the outlaws straggled painfully but in safety, the spray effacing every track of their footsteps, and the water carrying off every trace of the scent where they had passed, until they reached the topmost landing-place. There the stream was projected in an arch from the rock, which jutted out in a bold table; and there, stooping under the foamy sheet, the leader entered a low cavern, with a mouth scarce exceeding that of a fox earth, but expanding within into a large and roomy apartment, where they ate and caroused and slept at their ease, during the whole day and all the succeeding night; for the robbers insisted that no foot must be set without their cavern by the fugitive, until they should have ascertained by their spies that the Normans had quitted their neighborhood. This they did not until late in the following day, when they divided themselves into three parties, and struck off northwesterly toward the upper sands at the head of the bay, for which they had evidently concluded that Eadwulf was making, after they had exhausted every effort of ingenuity to discover the means of his inexplicable disappearance, on the verge of that tiny rivulet, running among open moors on the bare hill-sides.

So soon as they were certain of the direction which the

enemy had taken, and of the fact that they had abandoned the farther use of the bloodhounds, as unprofitable, the whole party struck due westerly across the hills, on a right line for Lancaster, guiding their companion with unerring skill across some twenty miles of partially-cultivated country, to the upper end of the estuary of the Lon, about one mile north of the city, which dreary water they reached in the gloaming twilight. Here a skiff was produced from its concealment in the rushes, and he was ferried over the frith, as a last act of kindness, by his entertainers, who, directing him on his way to the sands, the roar of which might be heard already in the distance, retreated with all speed to their hill fastnesses, from which they felt it would be most unsafe for them to be found far distant by the morning light.

The distance did not much exceed four miles; but, before he arrived at the end, Eadwulf met the greatest alarm which had yet befallen him; for, just as it was growing too dark to distinguish objects clearly, a horseman overtook him, or rather crossed him from the northward, riding so noiselessly over the sands, that he was upon him before he heard the sound of his tread.

Though escape was impossible, had it been a foe, he started instinctively to fly, when a voice hailed him friendly in the familiar Saxon tongue.

"Ho! brother Saxon, this is thou, then, is it?"

"I know not who thou art," replied Eadwulf, "nor thou me, I'll be sworn."

"Ay! but I do, though, bravely. Thou art the Saxon with the price of blood on thy head, whom the Normans have chased these three days, from beyond Rotherham. They lie

five miles hence on the hither side the Lon, and inquired after thee at twilight. But fear not for me. Only cross the sands early; the tide will answer with the first gray glimmer; and thou art safe in Westmoreland. And so God speed thee, brother."

A mile or two farther brought him to the verge of the wet sands, and there in the last brushwood he laid him down, almost too weary to be anxious for the morrow.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SANDS.

Splendor in heaven, and horror on the main!
Sunshine and storm at once—a troubled day;
Clouds roll in brightness, and descend in rain.
Now the waves rush into the rocky bay,
Shaking the eternal barriers of the land;
And ocean's face is like a battle-plain,
Where giant demons combat hand to hand.

EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

It was a wild and wicked morning, in the first red light of which, Eadwulf, awakening from the restless and uneasy sleep into which he had last night fallen, among the scattered brushwood growing on the seaward slope of the sand hills of Lancashire, looked across the wide sands, now left bare by the recess of the tide, stretching away to the bleak coasts of Westmoreland and Cumberland, and the huge mountain ridges, which might be seen indistinctly looming up blue and massive in the distance inland, distinguishable from clouds only by the hard abruptness of their outlines, as they cut sharp and clean against the lurid sky of the horizon.

Along the sea line, which lay grim and dark in ominous repose, the heaven's glared for a span's breadth, as it appeared to the eye, with a wild brassy light, above which brooded a solid belt of purple cloud, deepening into black as it rose

upward, and having a distinct, solid-looking edge, scolloped, as it were, into huge rounded masses, as material as if they had been earthy hills, instead of mere piles of accumulated vapor.

These volumed masses lay motionless, as yet, in the brooding calm; but, all upward to the zenith, the sky was covered with tortured and distracted wrack-wreaths, some black as night, some just touched by the sun, which was arising unseen by mortal eyes behind the cloud-banks which mustered so thick to the eastward, and some glowing with a fiery crimson gleam, as if they issued from the mouth of a raging furnance.

Every thing was ominous of a storm, but every thing as yet was calm, tranquil, and peaceful. In the very quiet, however, there was something awful, something that seemed to whisper of coming horror. The wide sands lay gray and leaden at the feet of the observer, reflecting the lowering clouds which overhung them, except where the brassy glare of the horizon tinged their extreme verge with an angry rust-colored hue, that seemed to partake the nature of shadow rather than of light.

The face of the Saxon fell as he gazed over the fearful waste, beyond which lay his last hope of safety; for, though he had never before seen those treacherous sands, he had learned much of their nature, especially from the outlaws, with whom he found his last shelter; and he knew, that to cross them certainly and in safety, the passenger on foot should set out with the receding tide, so as to reach the mid labyrinth of oozy channels and half-treacherous sand banks, through which the scanty and divided rivers of the fair lake-

land found their way oceanward, when the water was at lowest ebb.

Instead of this, however, so heavily had he slept towa morning, the utter weariness of his limbs and exhaustion o his body having completely conquered the watchfulness o his anxious mind, that the tide had so long run out, leaving the sands toward the shore, especially at this upper end of the bay, bare and hard as a beaten road, that it might well be doubted whether it had not already turned, and might not be looked for, ere he could reach the mid-channel, pouring in, unbroken, as it is wont to do in calm weather, over those boundless flats, with a speed exceeding that of horses.

There was no time for delay, however; for, from the report of the horseman who had overtaken him just before twilight, he could not doubt that his pursuers had not halted for the night farther than five or six miles in his rear; so that their arrival might be looked for at any moment, on any one of the headlands along the shore, whence they would have no difficulty in discerning him at several miles distance, while traveling over the light-colored surface of the sands.

Onward, therefore, he hastened, as fast as his weary limbs could carry him, hardly conscious whether he was flying from the greater danger, or toward it. He had a strong suspicion that the flood would be upon him ere he should reach the channel of Kent; and that he should find it an unfordable river, girdled by pathless quicksands. He knew, however, that be his chances of escape what they might by persisting onward, his death was as certain, by strange tortures, as any thing sublunary can be called certain, should the Normans

overtake him, red-handed from what they were sure to regard as recent murder.

On, therefore, he fled into the deceitful waste. At first, the sands were hard, even, and solid, yet so cool and damp under the worn and blistered feet of the wretched fugitive, that they gave him an immediate sense of pleasurable relief and refreshment; and for three or four miles he journeyed with such ease and rapidity as, compared to the pain and lassitude with which on the past days he had stumbled along, over the stony roads, and across the broken moors, that his heart began to wax more cheerful, and his hopes of escape warmed into something tangible and real.

Ere long, the sun rose clear above the eastern fog-banks, and all seemed still fair and tranquil; the sands, dry as yet, and firm, smiled golden-bright under the increasing warmth and lustre of the day, and the little rivulets, by which the fresh waters oozed to the deep, glittered like silver ribbons, checkering the yellow expanse.

The very gulls and terns, as they swooped joyously about his head, screaming and diving in the sunny air, or skimmed the sands in pursuit of such small fry as might have been left by the retreat of the waters, seemed, by their activity and happiness, to give him fresh hope and strength to support it.

Occasionally he turned, and cast a hurried glance toward the hills he had just left, down which the slant rays were streaming, to the limit where the green grass and scattered shrubs gave way to the bare sea-sands; and, as from each anxious scrutiny of the ground, he returned to his forward progress without discovering any signs of peril, his face lighted up anew, and he advanced with a freer and a bolder foot.

Still so weary was he, and so worn with his past toils, that he made but little real progress; and when he had been already an hour on the sands, he had accomplished little more than three miles of his route. The sands, from the point at which he had entered them, over against the city of Lancaster, and almost due west from that city to the nearest accessible headland of the opposite shore, were not less than nine miles in extent, the deepest and most dangerous parts being those nearest to the farther coast; but, measured to the place for which he was making, a considerable distance up the estuary of the Kent, they were at least three miles longer.

Two or three channels the fugitive had already crossed, and was rejoiced at finding the sandy bottom, over which the fresh water flowed some two or three inches deep, perfectly hard and beaten; at the end of his third mile he reached a broader expanse of water, where the sands were covered to the width of a hundred yards, and where the current, if that might be called a current which had scarcely any perceptible motion downward, took him nearly to the midleg. The foothold was, moreover, less firm than before, and his heavy brogues sank to the latchet in the yieding soil. This was the course of the first and smaller of the two rivers which fall into the eastern side of the bay from the county of Lancaster, and at about two miles distant, he could see the course of the second, glittering blue among the low sand-rollers which divided them.

Here he paused, undecided, for a few moments. He knew not what should be the depth of the water, or what the nature of the bottom; yet already he almost doubted, almost feared, that the time was passed, and that the tide had turned.

He looked southward, in the direction of the sea, which lay broad in view, though at many leagues distance; and, for the first time, it struck him that he could hear the moaning roll of its ever restless waves. He fancied, too, that the sands looked darker and more plashy, and that the silvery line which marked the margin of the waters, where the sun glinted on their quiet ripples, appeared nearer than when he had descended from the solid strand.

But, on the other hand, the sun-lighted slopes and crags of the opposite Lancastrian shore, near Flockborough Head, and the green point of Westmoreland, between the mouths of Windermere and the river Kent, lying in the full blaze of the unintercepted morning, looked much nearer than they really were, and seemed to beckon him forward with a smile of welcome. "Even if it be that the tide is turning," he thought, "I have yet the time to outstrip it; and, the quicker it mount, the wider the barrier it will place between me and my enemies."

Almost as these ideas passed his mind, a sound came to his ears, which banished in a moment every thought of the time, the tide, the peril of the sands.

It was the keen blast of a bugle, clearly winded on the shore from which he had just departed, but at a point a little higher up, to the northward, than that at which he had himself left it. In an instant, before he had even the time to turn round and take observation, a second bugle, yet farther to the north, took up the cadence, and, as that died away, yet a third, so faint, and so far to the northward, that it seemed like a mere echo of the first, replied.

He looked, and, clustered on the brink of the sands, exam-

ining the tracks his feet had left on the moist surface, there stood a little knot of three or four horsemen, one of whom it was easy to see, by the glitter of his mail-hood and hauberk, was completely armed. Two miles higher up, likewise on the shore, was another group, that which had replied to the first bugle-note, and which was now exchanging signals with those in the foreground, by the wafture of the pennoncelles which adorned their long lances.

There was now no longer a doubt. His pursuers had divided themselves into scattered parties, the better to scour the country, two of which had already discovered him, while there was evidently a third in communication with these by bugle-blast, not yet discernible to the eye, but prepared doubtless to strike across the upper portion of the sands near the head of the bay, and to intercept his flight, should he escape his immediate pursuers.

Another wild and prolonged flourish of the bugle, the very note which announces to the jovial hunters that the beast of chase is afoot, rang wildly over the sands, was repeated once and again; and then, with a fierce shout, spurring their heavily-barbed horses, and brandishing their long lances, the man-hunters dashed forward in pursuit.

The first party rode directly on the track of the fugitive, who toiled onward in full view as he ran, terror lending wings to his speed, almost directly northward, with his long shadow streaming westward over the dank sands, cutting the bright sunshine with a blue, rippling wake. The second, taking the passage higher up, rode at an oblique angle to the first pursuers, laying up to the point of Westmoreland, in order to cut off the fugitive; and, in a few moments afterward, yet

another group might be seen skirting the shore line, as if intent to intercept him in case of his landing.

The soil and water, spurned from the feet of the heavy chargers, flew high into the air, sparkling and plashing in the sunshine, like showers of metallic dust. It was a fearful race—a race for life and death, with odds, as it would seem, not to be calculated, against the panting fugitive.

At first, the horses careered easily over the surface, not sinking the depth of their iron-shoes in the firm substratum, while the man, whether from fatigue and fear, or that he was in worse ground, labored and slipped and stumbled at almost every step. The horses gained upon him at every stride, and the riders shouted already in triumph. It seemed, indeed, as if his escape was hopeless. The cavalry reached the first channel; it had widened a little, yet perceptibly, since Eadwulf had crossed it; but the horses leaped it, or dashed through it, without an effort.

The fugitive was now nearly in the middle of the sands; but his pursuers had already crossed, in a few minutes, one half of the space which it had cost him a painful two hours' toil to traverse; and, with at least five miles before him yet, what hope that he could maintain such speed as to run in the ratio of two to three of distance, against the strength and velocity of high-blooded horses?

But he had now reached the channel of the Beetham-water, and, as he crossed it, he stooped to ladle up a few drops in the hollow of his hand, to bathe his parched lips and burning brow. He saw it in an instant. The tide had turned, the waters were spreading wider and wider sensibly, they were running not slowly upward, they were salt to the taste already.

His rescue or his ruin, the flood-tide was upon him; and, strange to say, what at another time would have aroused his wildest terror, now wakened a slight hope of safety.

If he could yet reach, yet pass, the channel of the Kent, which lay, widening every moment, at some two miles farther yet before him, he might still escape both the cruel waters and the more savage man-hunters; but the distance was long, the fugitive weak with fatigue, weaker yet with fear, and the speed of thorough-bred horses was hard, as yet, behind him.

He paused a moment to watch, as the first party, his direct pursuers, reached the broad river-bed—they crossed it, and that seemingly without alarm or suspicion of danger, though their heavily-barbed horses sank belly-deep in the treacherous ford; but having stemmed it, as they charged onward, it was clear to Eadwulf that the horses buried their hoofs deeper at every stride; soon they were fetlock-deep in the heavy sands.

The second party crossed the same water-course higher up, and with less trouble; and these were now within two miles of the panting slave, shouting their war-cries, and spurring yet more furiously onward, having lost, if they had ever entertained any, all idea of danger, in the furious excitement of the chase, and taking no heed of the tokens of imminent and awful peril; and yet those tokens were now sufficient to appal the boldest.

One of the peculiarities of those terrible and fatal sands is, that the first approach of those entering tides, which come on, not with the ordinary roll and thunder of billows and flash of snowy surf, but swift and silent as the pestilence that flies by night, is harbingered by no outward and visible sight or

sound, but by the gradual and at first imperceptible conversion of the solid sands into miry and ponderous sludge, into moving quicksand, into actual water.

When the sounds and sights are heard and seen, it is too late to make an effort. Death is at hand, inevitable.

And now sights and sounds were both clear, palpable, nigh at hand. The dull murmur of the inrolling volumes might have been heard by the ears of any, so that they were not jangled and deafened by the clangor of their own iron-harness; the long white line of surf might have been seen by the eyes of any, so that they were not so riveted on some other object, that they could take heed of naught else within the range of their vision.

But the pursuers heard, saw nothing—nothing, unless it were the beating of their own savage hearts, the snorting of their laboring chargers, the clanking din of their spurs and scabbards, and the jingle of their chain-mail—unless it were the wretched fugitive, panting along, with his tongue literally hanging out of his parched jaws, and his eyes bursting from their sockets, like those of an over-driven ox, stumbling, staggering, splashing along, often falling, through the mingled sand and water, now mid-leg deep.

The party which had taken the sands at the most northern point had now so far over-reached upon the fugitive, that he had no longer a chance of crossing the course of the Kent in advance of them. If he persisted in his course, ten minutes more would have placed him under the counters of their horses and the points of their lances. The other body, who had followed him directly, had already perceived their danger, had pulled up, and were retracing their steps slowly, trying

to pick their way through the dryest ground, and, coasting up and down the side of the Beetham water, were endeavoring to find a ford passable for their heavy horses. Lower down the bay, by a mile or two, they were the first to be overtaken, the sands were already all afloat, all treacherous ooze, around them; the banks, dry places there were no longer any, were not to be distinguished from the channels of the rivers.

Suddenly, seeing himself cut off, blinded by his immediate terrors, and thinking only to avoid the more instant peril, Eadwulf turned southward—turned toward the billows, which were now coming in, six feet abreast, not two miles below him, tossing their foamy crests like the mane of the pale-horse of the Apocalypse, with a sound deeper and more appalling than the roar of the fiercest thunder. He saw the hopelessness of his position; and, at the same moment, the first horror of their situation dawned on the souls of his savage pursuers.

In that one glance, all was revealed to them; every thought, every incident, every action of their past lives, flashed before the eyes of their mind, as if reflected in a mirror; and then all was blank.

Every rein was drawn simultaneously, every horse halted where he stood, almost belly-deep in the sands, snorting and panting, blown and dead-beat by that fruitless gallop; and now the soil, every where beneath them and about them, was melting away into briny ooze, with slimy worms and small eels and lampreys wriggling obscenely, where a little while before, the heaviest war-horse might have pawed long and deep without finding water; and the waves were gaining on

them, with more than the speed of charging cavalry, and the nearest shore was five miles distant.

Within a furlong, on a solitary black stone, which might overtop the entering flood for an hour's space or better, lay Eadwulf, the serf. Utterly beaten, unable to move hand or foot, unable even to raise his head, or look the coming death in the face, where he had fallen, there he lay.

Two minutes, and the farthest of those horsemen might have taken him, might have speared him, where he lay, unresisting, unbeseeching. But none thought of him—none thought of any thing but the sea—the sea.

They paused for an instant to breathe their horses, before turning to ride that desperate race—but in that instant they saw such a sight as chilled their very blood. The other party, which had now retreated before the tide to within a mile of them to the eastward, had now determined, as it seemed, at all risks, to force their way back through the channel of the Beetham water, and entered it one by one, in single file, the unarmed guide leading, and the mail-clad rider bringing up the rear. Each after each, lower they sank and lower, their horses struggling and rolling in the surge. Now their croupes, now their withers disappeared from the eyes of the beholders; now the necks only of the horses and the bodies of the riders were visible above the wash. A moment of suspense, almost intolerable, for every one of those mute gazers felt that he was looking on the counterpart and perfect picture of what must in a few minutes, more or less, be his own fate also! A moment, and the guide's horse struggled upward, his withers reappeared, his croupe—he had cleared the channel, he was safe. A light page followed him, with the like suc-

cess; two half-armed troopers followed; already, presaging safety, a shout of exultation trembled on the lips of the spectators, when the mail-clad rider on his heavy horse reached the mid-passage—reached the spot where his horse should have gradually emerged—then in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, before one could breathe a sigh or syllable, a last "God save him"—he sank, sheer and sudden, as if the bottom had yawned under him, and without an effort, a cry, a struggle, was sucked under.

He was there—he was gone; never more to be seen above the face of the waters. At the same instant, just as they uttered one wild cry of horror and despair, or ere they could turn their horses' heads landward, a deep, cold, wet wind breathed upon them; a gray mist swept down on them, outrunning the trampling squadrons of the foamy waves; a fierce hail storm smote them; and, in an instant, every thing—shores, billows, skies—evanished from them, wrapped in utter gloom. Then they dispersed, each struggling through the rapidly-mounting waters in that direction which he fancied, in his blindness, should be shoreward. No one of them met other, more, in this world.

Strange it is to tell, but truths are ofttimes very strange, stranger than fiction, at that sharp, awful cry, wrenched by the horrible catastrophe of their comrade from the souls of his pursuers, aroused from the stupor which had fallen upon him, between the excess of weariness and the extremity of despair, Eadwulf raised his head. He saw the white surf tossing and breaking furiously in the distance; he saw the long line of deep, unbroken, swelling water, which had not been driven up from the sea, but had gushed and welled upward through

the pores of the saturated sand, rolling in five feet abreast, far in advance of the white rollers; swifter than either, darker and more terrible, he saw the ink-black, ragged hail-storm, a mere mist on the waters' surface—but, above, a contorted pile of solid, convoluted clouds, driving in, like a hurricane, before the breath of the rushing southeaster.

But, in that one lightning glance, he saw also, on the dark polished surface of the smooth water, in advance of the breakers, under the storm-cloud, a long black object, hurrying down before wind and tide, with speed exceeding that of the fleetest race horse, right upon the spot where he sat, despairing. He recognized it, at once, for one of the leathern coracles, as they were called, or rude fishing-boats of the natives of those wild and stormy shores; the rudest perhaps, but at the same time the most buoyant and seaworthy of boats. She was empty, he saw that at a glance, and rode the waves, outstripping the breakers, gallantly. Could he reach her, he might yet be saved.

He sat erect on his rock, resolute, with every nerve quivering with intense excitement, with every faculty braced, ready for the last exertion.

The cloud fell on him black as midnight; the fierce wind smote his elf-locks, making them stream and shiver in its currents; the cutting hail lashed him with arrowy keenness. Quickly as it came, it passed; and a gleam of troubled sunshine shimmered through a rent in the black storm, and glanced like a hopeful smile upon the waters. In that momentary brilliance, the wretch caught a glimpse of the black boat, floating past his solitary rock, and without an instant's hesitation, rushing waist deep into the frothy eddies, fought

his way, he never well knew how, through surge and quicksand, till he had caught her by the gunwale. Then, spurning the yielding sands with a tremendous effort, he leaped, or hurled himself rather, into her, and lay for a breathing-space motionless, and stunned by the very perception of the strange vicissitude to which he owed his safety.

But it was no time for self-indulgence; and, ignorant as he was, semi-barbarous, and half-brutalized, he perceived the nature of the crisis. The oars or paddles by which the coracle was impelled were lashed by thongs to her row-locks, and, getting them out at once, Eadwulf plied them vigorously, keeping her right stern before the entering tide, and pulling with all his might, to outstrip the combing of each successive roller.

For a short space, the glimmer in the air continued; then the mist gathered down again, and all was gloom, except the white caps of the breakers, tossing and shivering in the twilight. But it was now mist only; the wind had sunk, and the storm-cloud been driven landward.

And now, so dexterously had the serf managed his little vessel, that, as he shot away from each combing sea-cap, the surges had swept under instead of over him, and he found himself riding buoyantly on the long, gentle swell, while the surf, gradually subsiding, ran up the sands, murmuring hoarsely far before him.

Suddenly, close ahead of him, not as it seemed ten yards from the bow of the boat, there arose an angry clash of steel, a loud cry, "Jesu! Jesu Maria!" and a deep groan; and, the next instant, the body of a riderless horse, with its head half submerged, panting and snorting out its last agonies, was

swept so close to his vessel that he could have touched it with the oar. One other minute, and a light air was felt sensibly; the mist began to lift and shiver; the darkness seemed to melt, and to be penetrated and imbued with the sunbeams, till it resembled a gauzy screen interposed before a strong light.

Another moment, and it rose bodily from the water, floated upward into the skies, and left all below laughing, clear in the sunlight. There was no sand now to be seen, save a narrow yellow stripe on the edge of the soft verdant points, which stretched out from the shores of Westmoreland, sparkling in the sun and glittering in the rain-drops, into the broad bosom of Morecambe Bay, which was now filled with the tide, though it had not as yet nearly risen to its highest mark—but here and there, at intervals, dark spots showed in the expanse of waters, where the tops of the highest sand-banks were scarcely submerged at all, on which the gentle eddies rippled and sparkled, as wavelet after wavelet rolled in by its own mounting impulse, but hastened by no angry gust or turbulent billow.

On one of these sand-banks, having so long escaped, Heaven knows how, quicksands and breakers, and having made his way thus far landward, sat a tall, powerful man-at-arms, sheathed from head to heel in a complete panoply of chain mail. His horse was likewise caparisoned in the heaviest bardings—chamfront and poitrel, steel demi-pique and bard proper—nothing was wanting of the heaviest caparison with which charger or man ever rode into the tilt-yard or mêlée.

The tide was already above the horse's belly, and the rider's plated shoes and mail hose were below the surface. Deep water was around him on every side, the nearest shore

a mile distant, and to swim fifty yards, much less a mile, under that weight of steel, was impossible; still he sat there, waiting his doom, silent and impassive.

He was the last of the pursuers; he alone of the two parties, who but three short hours before had spurred so fiercely in pursuit of the wretched slave, had escaped the fate of Pharaoh and his host, when the Red Sea closed above them. He alone breathed the breath of life; and he, certain of death, awaited it with that calm composure, which comes to the full as much of artificial training as of innate valor.

As the clouds lifted, this solitary man saw, at once, the boat approaching, and saw who rowed it—saw rescue close at hand, yet at the same time saw it impossible. His face had hardly the time to relax into one gleam of hope, before it again settled down into the iron apathy of despair.

The coracle swept up abreast of him, then paused, as Eadwulf, half unconsciously, rested on his oars, and gazed into the despairing and blank features of his enemy. It was the seneschal of Waltheofstow, the brother of the man whom he had slain in the forest.

Their eyes met, they recognized each other, and each shuddered at the recognition. For a moment, neither spake; but, after a short, bitter pause, it was the rider who broke silence.

"So, it is thou, Saxon dog, who alone hast escaped from this destruction!"

"It is I, man-hunter. Where are thy boasts and threats now? Why dost not ask the serf, now, for life, for mercy?"

"Because thou couldst not give it, if thou wouldst; and wouldst not, if thou couldst. Go thy way, go thy way! We shall meet one day, in that place whither our deeds will

carry us. Go thy way, unless thou wouldst stay, and look how a Norman dies. I fear neither death, nor thee. Go thy way, and the fiend go with thee."

And, with the word, he went his way, coldly, sternly, pitilessly, and in silence; for he felt, in truth, that the seneschal had spoken truly, that he could not save him if he would, unless he would save his own sworn destroyer. Sullenly, slowly, he rowed onward, reached the land; and still, as he looked back, with his horse's neck and his armed trunk eminent above the level waters, glittering in his bright mail, sat the fearless rider. Wearied and utterly exhausted, both in mind and body, the serf gazed, half-remorsefully, at the man whom he had so mercilessly abandoned to his fate, and who bore it so sternly, awaiting the last inevitable moment with more than a stoic's fortitude and pride. For a moment he hesitated whether he should pursue his journey; but an irresistible fascination compelled him to sit down and await the end, and he did so.

And there those two sat, face to face, at a mile's distance, for a long half hour, in plain view, each almost fancying that he could peruse the features, almost fancying that he could read the thoughts of his enemy—each in agony of soul, and he, perhaps, in the greater anguish who had escaped, as it would seem, all peril, and for whom death seemed to wait, distant and unseen, at the end of a far perspective.

At the termination of half an hour, there was a motion, a strife—the water had reached the nostrils of the charger. He tossed his head a few times, angrily; then, after rearing once or twice, with his rider yet erect in his saddle, subsided into deep water, and all was over.

Eadwulf crept away up the bank, found a thick dingle in the wood, and, coiling himself up in its densest spot, slept, dreamless and unrepentant, until the morrow's sun was high in heaven.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SUPPLIANT.

Brother, be now true to me,
And I shall be as true to thee;
As wise God me speed.

AMYS AND AMYLLION

THE year had by this time worn onward to the last days of summer, or one might almost say to the earliest days of autumn, and the lovely scenery of the lake country had begun to assume its most beautiful and picturesque coloring.

For in the early summer months the hues of the whole region are too generally green, without any variation except that produced by the effect of sunshine and shadow. The sides of the turf-covered mountains, the birch and oak coppices on their lower slopes, the deep meadows, at their base, are all overspread with the richest and most intense verdure; even the reflections in the bosom of the clear lakes preserve the same general tints, diversified only by the cerulean blue caught from the deep overhanging heavens, and the not dissimilar hue of the craggy summits of the loftier hilltops, where the slaty character of the rocks, partly impregnated with iron, partly incrusted with gray lichens, "overspread in many places," to quote the words of a fine writer and true

lover of nature, "the steep and almost precipitous sides of the mountains, with an intermixture of colors like the compound hues of a dove's neck."

"When, in the heat of advancing summer," he proceeds thereafter, "the fresh green tint of the herbage has somewhat faded, it is again revived by the appearance of the fern profusely spread every where; and upon this plant, more than upon any thing else, do the changes, which the seasons make in the coloring of the mountains depend. About the first week in October, the rich green, which prevailed through the whole summer, has usually passed away. The brilliant and various colors of the fern are then in harmony with the autumnal woods; bright yellow, or lemon color, at the base of the mountains, melting gradually, through orange, to a dark russet brown toward the summits, where the plant, being more exposed to the weather, is in a more advanced state of decay. Neither heath nor furze are generally found upon the sides of the mountains, though in some places they are richly adorned by them. We may add, that the mountains are of height sufficient to have the surface toward the summits softened by distance, and to imbibe the finest aërial hues. In common also with other mountains, their apparent forms and colors are perpetually changed by the clouds and vapors which float round them; the effect indeed of mist or haze, in a country of this character, is like that of magic. I have seen six or seven ridges rising above each other, all created, in a moment, by the vapors upon the side of a mountain, which, in its ordinary appearance, showed not a projecting point to furnish even a hint for such an operation.

"I will take this opportunity of observing, that they who

have studied the appearances of nature feel that the superiority, in point of visual interest, of mountainous over other countries, is more strikingly displayed in winter than in summer. This, as must be obvious, is partly owing to the forms of the mountains, which, of course, are not affected by the seasons, but also, in no small degree, to the greater variety that exists in their winter than their summer coloring. This variety is such, and so harmoniously preserved, that it leaves little cause of regret when the splendor of the season has passed away. The oak coppices, upon the sides of the mountains, retain russet leaves; the birch stands conspicuous with its silver stems and puce-colored twigs; the hollies, with green leaves and scarlet berries, have come forth into view from among the deciduous trees, whose summer foliage had concealed them; the ivy is now plentifully apparent upon the stems and boughs of the trees, and among the wooded rocks. In place of the uniform summer-green of the herbage and fern, many rich colors play into each other over the surface of the mountains; turf, the tints of which are interchangeably tawny-green, olive, and brown, beds of withered fern and gray rocks being harmoniously blended together. The mosses and lichens are never so flourishing as in winter, if it be not a season of frost; and their minute beauties prodigally adorn the foreground. Wherever we turn, we find these productions of nature, to which winter is rather favorable than unkindly, scattered over the walls, banks of earth, rocks and stones, and upon the trunks of trees, with the intermixture of several species of small fern, now green and fresh; and, to the observing passenger, their forms and colors are a source of inexhaustible admiration."—WORDSWORTH.

Thus far have I quoted the accurate and simple language of the great Poet of the Lakes, since, none other that I can choose would place before the eyes of my readers so vivid a reality of the scenery of that loveliest portion of picturesque England, in its finest aspect.

It was not, indeed, quite so deep in the season, that all the changes so beautifully depicted above had yet occurred, when, late in a clear autumnal evening, Kenric and Edith stood together in the porch of their new home, gazing across the tranquil bosom of the little mere, and down the pastoral valley of the Kent, yet the face of the picture was close to that described in the quotations. The trees, in the level ground and in the lower valleys, had not lost all their verdure, though the golden, the russet, and the ruddy-red, had intermingled largely with the green; the meadows, by the water-edge, had not changed a tint, a shade of their summer glory, but all the hill-sides were as they stand painted by the poet-pen of the child of Nature.

The sun was setting far away, to the right hand, as they gazed down the long dale to the southward, behind the mighty tops of Hawkshead and Blackcomb, which towered against the gorgeous golden-sky, flecked with a thousand glowing cloudlets, orange and rosy-red, and glaring crimson, like a huge perpendicular wall of dusky purple; with the long basin of Windermere, visible from that elevation over the lower intervening ridges, lying along their bases as it seemed, though in truth many miles distant, a sheet of beaten-gold. The lower hills, to the west of Kentmere, downward to Bowness, whose chapel-window gleamed like fire in the distance, were shrouded in soft purple haze, and threw long blue shad-

ows across the rich vale, broken by the slant golden beams which streamed through the gaps in their summits, in far-reaching pencils of misty light. At the same time, the little lake of Kentmere lay at the feet of the spectators, still, clear, and transparent as an artificial mirror, giving back a counterfeit presentment of every thing around and above it, only less real than the actual reality; while toward the precipitous and craggy hills, behind them and on their left, the westering sun sent forth such floods of rosy and golden light as illuminated all their projections and cavities, bringing them, with all their accidents of crag or coppice, ivy-bush or silvery birch-tree, close to the eye of the beholder, blended with an intermixture of solemn shadows, seen distinctly through the clear atmosphere.

Over this scene the happy couple gazed with such feelings as none can gaze, but they who are good and happy. The sleepy hum of the good mother's wheel came drowsily through the open doorway; the distant laugh and cry of the hunter's boys, as they were clearing the kennels and feeding the hounds for the night, with an occasional bay or whimper of their impatient charges, rose pleasantly on the night air. Most of the natural sounds and sights had ceased; the songs of the birds were silent, for the nightingales visit not those valleys of the west; the bleat of the flocks was heard no more; the lowing of the herds had passed homeward; only a few late swallows skimmed the bosom of the mere, which a leaping trout would break, now and then, with a loud plash, into a silvery maze of circling dimples; and the jarring note of the nighthawk, as his swift wing glanced under the brown shadows of the oak, in chase of the great evening moths, was heard

in the gloaming; and the pinions of the great golden-eagle hung like a shadow, leagues up in the burning sky.

Perfect contentment was the breathing spirit of the calm and gentle scene, with something of that heavenly peace which induced the friend of Izaac Walton to apostrophize the Sabbath, as

> "Sweet day, so calm, so pure, so bright,
> The bridal of the earth and sky;"

and perfect were the contentment and peace which the adjuncts inspired into the hearts of those, who, of late so hopeless and suffering, now looked over the face of the fair earth, and thence upward to the boundless sky, as who should say, "Not in one only, but in both of these, we have our heritage."

But while they gazed, the sun sunk lower in the west, the round tops of the vast blue mountains intercepted his lustrous disk, and heavy twilight fell, like the shadow of a cloud, over the valley and the steep faces of the north-eastern hills.

Just at this moment, while the girl was whispering something about entering the house and preparing the evening-meal, she observed her husband's eye fixed on the declivity of the hills above the lake shore, and, following the direction of his glance, she speedily discovered a dark figure making its way in a crouching attitude among the stunted shrubs, and evidently avoiding, or striving to avoid, observation.

Something between a shudder and a start seemed to shake the manly form of Kenric for an instant; and his young wife, perceiving it as she clung to his arm, looked up to his face for explanation.

"Something is going wrong up yonder," said the verdurer;

"some marauder after the roe-deer, I trow. I must up and after him. Give me my bugle, Edith, my wood-knife, and my gisarme; I will take the black alan with me; he lies under the settle, by the hearth. Fetch them, girl."

And while she went, he stood gazing with his hawk's eye on the lurking figure, though it was wonderful, in the distance and gloom, that he could distinguish even the outlines of the human form. Yet it was evident that he did distinguish something more than that, for he smote his thigh with his hand heavily, as he muttered, "It is he, by St. Edward the Confessor! What new disaster can have brought him hither?"

The next moment Edith stood beside him, bearing the weapons, and accompanied by the great grizzly deer-grayhound.

"Kenric," she said, as he was leaving her, "this is something more than mere marauders. There is danger!"

"I trust not, girl," he answered, kindly; "but if there be, I and Black Balder here, are men enough to brunt it. But hark you, girl, get supper over as quickly as you may, and have our mother to her chamber, and the varlets to their quarter in the kennels; and do you sit up, without a light, mark me, and, whatever shall fall out, be silent. I may bring some one with me."

"I knew it," she murmured to herself, as she turned away to do his bidding. "It is Eadwulf. What brings him hither? No good, I warrant me."

Meanwhile Kenric scaled the crags rapidly, with the hound at his heels, and, when he reached the spot where he had seen the figure, halted, and whistled a bar or two of an old Saxon ballad of Sherwood. It was answered, and from out

of the brushwood Eadwulf came, cringing, travel-soiled, weary, and disaster-stricken, to the knees almost of his brother.

"So. This is thou, Eadwulf? I thought as much. What brings thee hither?"

"Almost as fair cause as I find fair welcome."

"I looked for no other. Thou art a runaway, then, and pursued? Come, speak out, man, if thou wouldst have me aid thee."

"Thou dost not seem overly glad to see me, brother."

"How should I be glad? When did thy presence ever bring joy, or aught else than disaster and disgrace? But speak, what brings thee hither? How hast thou escaped? Art thou pursued? What dost thou require?"

"Last asked, first answered. Rest, refuge, clothing, food, asylum. Last Monday is a week, I *was* pursued; pursuit has ceased, but I misdoubt me I am tracked. By strong hand I escaped, and fleet foot—"

"By red hand?" asked Kenric.

"Ay! red, with the blood of deer!"

"And of man, Eadwulf? Nay! man, lie not to me. Dark as it is, I read it in thy black brow and sullen eye."

"Well, then, man's blood, if you will. And now, will you yield your own brother's life a forfeit to the man-hunter, or the hunter of blood?"

"No," answered Kenric, sadly; "that must not be. For you *are* my brother. But I must know *all*, or I will do nothing. You can tell me as we go; my home is in the valley yonder. There you can rest to-night; to-morrow you must away to the wilderness, there to be safe, if you may,

without bringing ruin upon those who, doing all for you, look for nothing from you but wrong and ingratitude."

"To-morrow! True brotherly affection! Right Saxon hospitality. Our fathers would have called this *nidering!*"

"Never heed thou that. Tell me all that has passed, or thou goest not to my house, even for this night only. For myself, I care nothing, and fear nothing. My wife, and my mother—these, thy blind selfishness and brute instincts, at least, shall not ruin."

And thereupon, finding farther evasion useless, as they went homeward by a circuitous path among the rocks and dingles, he revealed all that the reader knows already, and this farther, which it is probable he has suspected, that Eadwulf, lying concealed in the forest in pursuance of some petty depredation, had been a witness of the dastardly murder of Sir Philip de Morville by the hands of Sir Foulke d'Oilly and his train, among whom most active was the black seneschal, who had perished so fearfully in the quicksands.

"Terrible, terrible indeed!" said Kenric, as he ended his tale, doggedly told, with many sullen interruptions. "Terrible his deed, and terrible thy deeds, Eadwulf; and, of all, most terrible the deeds of Him who worked out his will by storm, and darkness, and the terror of the mighty waters. And of a surety, terrible will be the vengeance of Foulke d'Oilly. He is not the man to forget, nor are thy deeds, deeds to be forgotten. But what shall I say to thee, obstinate, obdurate, ill-doer, senseless, rash, ungrateful, selfish? Already, in this little time, had Edith and I laid by, out of our humble gains, enough to purchase two thirds of thy freedom. Ere Yule-tide, thou hadst been as free a man as stands on English

earth, and now thou art an outlaw, under ban forever, and blood-guiltiness not to be pardoned; and upon us—us, who would have coined our hearts' blood into gold, to win thy liberty—thou hast brought the odor, and the burden, and, I scarce doubt it, the punishment, of thy wicked wilfullness. It were better thou hadst perished fifty-fold in the accursed sands of Lancaster, or ere thou hadst done this thing. It were better a hundred-fold that thou hadst never been born."

"Why dost not add, 'better a thousand-fold thou wert delivered up to the avenger of blood,' and then go deliver me?"

"Words are lost upon thee," replied his brother, shaking his head mournfully, "as are actions likewise. Follow me; thou must have 'tendance and rest above all things, and to-morrow must bring forth the things of to-morrow."

Nothing more passed between them until they reached the threshold of Kenric's humble dwelling, where, in silence and darkness, with the door ajar, listening to every distant sound of the fitful breeze or passing water, the fair young wife sat awaiting them.

She arose, as they entered. "Ah! it is thou, Eadwulf; I thought so, from the first. Enter, and sit. Wilt eat or bathe first? thou art worn and weary, brother, as I can see by this gloaming light. There is a good bed ready for thee, under the rafters, and in the morning thou wilt awake, refreshed and strong—"

"Thou thoughtst so from the first. I warrant me thou didst—mayhap thy husband told thee so. Brother, too! *he* hath not greeted me as brother. Eat, bathe, sleep? neither of the three, girl. I'll drink first of all; and, if that please

thee, then eat, then sleep; and bathe when I may, perhaps not at all."

"Bring him the mead-pitcher, Edith, and the big horn, and then avoid ye. There is blood on his hand, and worse than blood on his soul. Leave the meat on the board. I'll see to him."

And when his wishes were fulfilled, they were left alone, and a long, gloomy conversation followed; and, if the dark, sullen, and unthankful heart of the younger brother was in no sort touched, or his better feelings—if he had any—awakened, at least his fears were aroused, and, casting aside all his moroseness, he became a humble, I had almost said a craven, suppliant for protection.

"Protection!" said Kenric, "I have it not to give, nor can I ask those who could. I know not, in truth, whether in sheltering you, even now, I do not risk the safety of all that is dear to me. What I can do, I will. This night, and all the day to-morrow, I will conceal thee here, come of it what come may; and, at the dead of the next night, will guide thee, through the passes, to the upper hill country, where thou wilt soon find men, like thyself, of desperate lives and fortunes. Money, so much as I have, I will give thee, and food for thy present need; but arms, save thy wood-knife, thou shalt take none hence. I will not break faith nor betray duty to my lord, let what may come of it; and, if I find thee trespassing on his chase, or hunting of his deer, I will deal with thee as a stranger, not as a kinsman. No thanks, Eadwulf; nor no promises. I have no faith in thee, nor any hope, save that we two may never meet again. And so, good-night."

And with the word, he led him to a low room under the

rafters, furnished with a tolerable bed, but remote from all observation, where he was tended all the following day, and watched by Edith, or by himself in person, until the next night settled dark and moonless over wild fell and mountain tarn; when he conducted him up the tremendous passes which lead to the desolate but magnificent wilderness, stretching, in those days, untrodden save by the deer, the roebuck, the tusky boar, the gray wolf, or the grizzly outlaw, for countless leagues around the mighty masses of Helvellyn, Saddleback, and Skiddaw, the misty mountain refuge of all conquered races—of the grim Celts from the polished Romans, of the effete Britons from the sturdy Saxons, of the vanquished Anglo-Saxons, from the last victorious Normans.

They parted, with oaths of fidelity and vows of gratitude never to be fulfilled on the part of Eadwulf, with scarce concealed distrust on the part of Kenric.

It was broad day when the latter returned to his happy home by Kentmere; and the first object he beheld was his wife, gazing despondingly on his own crossbow and bolts, each branded with his name—"Kenric, born thrall of Philip de Morville," of which, unwittingly he had disarmed his brother on the night of his arrival.

His heart fell as he looked upon the well-known weapons; and thought that probably it was one of those marked and easily-recognized bolts which had quivered in the heart of the bailiff of Waltheofstow; but his wife knew not the dark tale, and he was not the man to disturb her peace of mind, however his own might be distracted, by any dubious or uncertain fear.

"It is my old arbalast," he said, "which Eadwulf brought

with him from our ancient home. Lay it aside. I will never use it more; but it will be as a memento of what we once were, but, thanks to God and our good lords, are no longer. And now give me my breakfast, Edith; I must be at the castle, to speak of all this with Sir Yvo, ere noon; I will be back to-night, girl; but not, I trow, until the northern bear has sunk behind the hills. Till then, may He keep thee!

And he was grave and abstracted during all the morning meal, and only kissed her in silence, and blessed her inwardly, in his own true heart, as he departed.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LADY AND HER LOVER.

> Fair Ellen that was so mild
> More she beheld Triamour the child,
> Than all other men.
>
> SIR TRIAMOUR.

LONG before the dawn had begun to grow gray in the east, Kenric had taken his way to the castle, by a direct path across the hills to a point on the lake shore, where there always lay a small ferry-boat, for the use of the castellan, his household, and vassals. Edith, to whom he had told all that he had extorted from Eadwulf, and who, like himself, clearly foresaw difficulty and danger at hand, arising from the conduct and flight of the ill-conditioned and ill-starred brother, went about her household work, most unusual for her, with a melancholy and despondent heart.

She, who while a serf had been constantly, almost recklessly gay, as one who had no sorrow for which to care, wore a grave brow, and carried a heavy heart. For liberty, if it give independence to the body and its true expansion to the soul, brings responsibility also, and care. She carolled this morning no blythe old Saxon ballads as she kneaded her barley cakes, or worked her overflowing churn; she had this

morning no merry word with which to greet the verdurer's boys, as they came and went from her ample kitchen with messes for the hounds to the kennels, or raw meat for the eyasses in the mews; and they wondered not a little, for the kindness and merry humor of their young mistress had won their hearts, and they were grieved to see her downcast. She was restless, and unable, as it seemed, to settle herself to any thing, coming and going from one place to another, without much apparent object, and every half hour or so, opening the door and gazing wistfully down the valley, toward the sea, not across the hills over which her husband had bent his way.

It must have been nearly ten o'clock, in those unsophisticated days approaching nearly to the dinner hour, when something caught her eye at a distance, which instantly brought a bright light into it, and a clear, rich color to her cheek; and she clapped her hands joyously, crying, "I am so glad! so glad!" Then, hurrying into the house, she called to the boys, giving them quick, eager orders, and set herself to work arranging the house, strewing the floor with fresh green rushes, and decking the walls with holly branches, the bright-red berries of the mountain ash, wild asters, and such late wood-flowers as yet survived, with a spirit very different from the listless mood which had possessed her.

What was the vision that had so changed the tenor of her mind?

Winding through one of those green lanes—which form so exquisite a feature in the scenery of the lake country, with their sinuous, gray boundary stone walls, bordered with ashes, hazels, wild roses, and beds of tall fern at their base, while

the walls themselves are overspread with small ferns, wild strawberries, the geranium, and rich lichens—there came a fair company, the persons of which were easily distinguished by Edith, in that clear atmosphere, when at a mile's distance from the cottage—a mile which was augmented into nearly three by the meanderings of the lane, corresponding with those of the brook.

In the front rode a lady, the Lady Guendolen, on a beautiful chesnut-colored Andalusian jennet, with snow-white mane and tail, herself splendidly attired in a dark murrey-colored skirt, passamented with black embroidery, and above it a surcoat or tunic, fitting the body closely a little way below the hips, of blue satin, embroidered in silver with the armorial bearings of her house—a custom as usual in those days with the ladies as with the knights of the great houses. Her head was covered with a small cap of blue velvet, with one white feather, and on her left hand, covered by a doe-skin hawking-glove, was set a superb gosshawk, unhooded, so familiar was he with his bright mistress, and held only by a pair of silver jesses, corresponding with the silver bells which decked his yellow legs, and jingled at his every motion. By her side, attending far more to his fair companion than to the fiery horse which he bestrode, was a young cavalier, bending over her with an air of the deepest tenderness, hanging on her words as if they were more than the sweetest music to his soul, and gazing on her with affection so obvious as to show him a permitted lover. He was a powerful, finely-formed young man, of six or eight-and-twenty years, with a frank open countenance, full of intellect, nobleness, and spirit, with an occasional shadow of deep thought, but hardly to be

called handsome, unless it were for the expression, since the features, though well cut, were not regular, and the complexion was too much sun-burned and weather-hardened even for manly beauty.

Altogether he was, however, a remarkably attractive-looking person. He sat his horse superbly, as a king might sit his throne; his every motion was perfect majesty of grace; and when he smiled, so radiant was the glance lighting up the dark face, that he was, for the moment, actually handsome. He was dressed in a plain, dark hunting suit, with a bonnet and feather of the same hue, and untanned deer buskins, the only ornament he wore being a long blue scarf, of the same color as the surcoat of his mistress, and embroidered, probably by her hand, with the same bearings. The spurs in his buskins, however, were not gilded, and the light estoc, or sharp-pointed hunting-sword, which hung at his left side, showed by its form that he had not yet attained the honors of knighthood.

Aradas de Ratcliffe was the heir male of a line, one of the first and noblest which had settled in the lake country, in the beautiful vale of Rydal, but a little way distant to the northward from the lands of Sir Yvo de Taillebois. His father, a baron of great renown, had taken the Cross when far advanced in life, and proceeding to the Holy Land with that disastrous second Crusade, led by Conrad III. the German Emperor, and Louis VII. of France, at the summoning of Pope Eugene III., had fallen in the first encounter with the infidels, and dying under shield, knight-like, had left his infant son with no other guardian than his mother, a noble lady of the house of Fitz Norman.

She had discharged her trust as became the character of her race; and so soon as the boy was of sufficient years, he was entered in the household of Sir Yvo de Taillebois, as the finest school in the whole realm for the aspirant to honor in arms.

Here, as page and esquire, he had served nearly twenty years of his life, first following his lord's stirrup, until he was perfect in the use of his arms, and old enough to wield them; then, fighting in his train, until he had proved himself of such stern fidelity and valor, that he became his favorite attendant, and most trusted man-at-arms.

In feudal days, it must be remembered that it was no disgrace to a scion of the highest family to serve his pagehood under a noble or knight of lineage and renown; on the contrary, it was both a condition that must be undergone, and one held as an honor to both parties; so much so, that barons of the greatest name and vastest demesnes in the realm would often solicit, and esteem it as a high favor, to have their sons ride as pages in the train of some almost landless knight, whose extraordinary prowess should have won him an extraordinary name.

These youths, moreover, as they were nobly born, so were they nobly entreated; nothing low or mean was suffered to come before them. Even in their services, nothing menial was required of them. To arm their lord for battle, to follow him to the tournament or to the field, where to rush in to his rescue if beaten down, to tend his hurts if wounded, to bear his messages, and guard his secrets as his own life, to wait on the ladies—these were the duties of a page in the twelfth century. Courage, truth, honor, fidelity unto death, courtesy,

humility to the humble, haughtiness to the haughty—these were the lessons taught him. It may be doubted whether our teachings in the nineteenth are so far superior, and whether they bear so far better fruits in the end!

Be this, however, as it may, Aradas de Ratcliffe, having grown up in the same household with the beautiful Guendolen, though some twelve years her senior, had grown up to love her; and his promise of manhood being in no wise inferior to her beauty, his birth equal to her own, and his dead father an old and trusted friend of Sir Yvo, he was now riding by her side, not only as her surest defender, but as her affianced husband; it being settled, that so soon as the youthful esquire should have won his knightly spurs, the lands of Hawkshead, Coniston, and Yewdale, should be united with the adjoining demesnes of Rydal manor, dim with its grand old woods, by the union of the heiress of De Taillebois to the heir of the proud Ratcliffes.

And now they had ridden forth on this bright and fair autumnal morning, partly to fly their hawks at the herons, for which the grassy meads in the vale of Kentmere were famous, partly to visit the new home of Guendolen's favorite Edith, and more, in truth, than all, to enjoy the pleasure of a loving *tête-à-tête;* for the girl who followed her lady kept discreetly out of ear-shot, and amused herself flirting with the single page who accompanied them; and the rest of the train, consisting of grooms, falconers, and varlets, bearing the hawks and leading the sumpter-mules, lagged considerably in the rear.

There was not, however, very much of gayety in the manner of either of the young people; the fair face of Guendolen

was something paler than its use, and her glad eyes had a beseeching look, even while she smiled, and while her voice was playful; and there was a sorrowful shadow on the brow of Aradas, and he spoke in a grave, low tone, though it was full of gentleness and trust.

In truth, like Jacob of old, when he served for the daughters of Laban, the young esquire was waxing weary of the long servitude and the hope deferred. The temporary lull of war, which at that time prevailed over both England and the French provinces belonging to the crown, gave him no hope of speedily winning the desired spurs; and the bloody wars, which were in progress on the shores of the sister island, though fierce and sanguinary enough to satisfy the most eager for the perils and honors of the battle-field, were not so evidently favored by the monarch, or so clear from the taint of piracy, as to justify a cavalier, of untainted character and unbroken fortunes, in joining the invaders. But in this very year had the eyes of all the Christian world been strongly turned toward Palestine, where Baldwin IV., a minor, and a leper, and no match for the talents and power of the victorious Saladin, sat feebly on the throne of the strong crusading Kings of Jerusalem, which was now tottering to its fall, under the fierce assaults of the Mussulman.

Henry II. and Louis of France had sworn to maintain between them the peace of God, and to join in a third Crusade for the defense of the Tomb of Christ and the Holy City. In this war, Aradas saw the certainty of winning knighthood; but Guendolen, who would have armed her champion joyously, and buckled on his sword with her own hand, for any European conflict, shuddered at the tales of the poisoned sarbacanes

and arrows with which report armed the gigantic Saracens—shuddered at the knives of the assassins of the mountains—at the pestilences which were known to brood over those arid shores; and yet more, at the strange monsters, dragons, and winged-serpents—nay, fiends and incarnate demons—with which superstitious horror peopled the solitudes which had witnessed the awful scenes of the Temptation, the Passion, and the Death, of the Son of God.

In short, she interposed her absolute nay, with the quiet but positive determination of a woman, and clinched it with a woman's argument.

"You do not love me, Aradas," she said; "I know you do not love me, or you would never think of speaking of that fearful country, or of taking the Cross—that country, from which no one ever returns alive—or, if he do return, returns so bent and bowed with plague and fever, or so hacked and mangled by the poisoned weapons of the savages, that he is an old man ere his prime, and dead before —— No, no! I will not hear of it! No, I will not! I will not love you, if you so much as breathe it to me again, Aradas!"

"That were a penalty," said the young man, half-sadly smiling; "but, can you help it, Guendolen?"

"Don't trust in that, sir," she said. "One can do any thing—every thing—by trying."

"Can one, pardie! I would you would show me, then, how to win these spurs of gold, by trying."

"I can. Be firm, be faithful, and, above all, be patient. Remember, without hope, without patience, there is no evidence of faith; without faith, there is, there can be, neither true chivalry nor true love. Besides, we are very young, we

are very happy as we are; occasion will come up, perhaps is at hand even now; and—and—well, if I am worth having, I am worth waiting for, Beausire Aradas; and if you don't think so, by 'r lady, you 'd better bestow yourself where—"

"Whoop! whoop! So ho! He mounts! he mounts!" A loud shout from the rear of the party interrupted her. In the earnestness of their conversation, they had cleared the confines of the winding lane, and entered, without observing it, a beautiful stretch of meadow-land, intersected by small rivulets and water-courses, sloping down to the lake shore. Some of the grooms and varlets had spread out over the flat grass-land, beating the reeds with their hawking-poles, and cheering their merry spaniels. The shout was elicited by the sudden uprising of the great, long-necked hermit-fisher, from a broad reed belt by the stream-side, flapping his broad gray vans heavily on the light air, and stretching his long yellow legs far behind him, as he soared skyward, with his harsh, clanging cry.

All eyes were instantly turned to the direction of the shout, and every heart bounded at the sight of the quarry.

"Whoop! Diamond! whoop!" cried the young girl, as she cast off her gallant falcon; and then, seeing her lover throw off his long-winged peregrine to join in the flight, "A wager, Aradas. My glove on 'Diamond' against 'Helvellyn.' What will you wager, Beausire?"

"My heart!"

"Nay! I have that already. Else you swore falsely. Against your turquoise ring. I 'll knot my kerchief with it."

"A wager! Now ride, Guendolen; ride, if you would see the wager won."

And they gave the head to their horses, and rode furiously. No riding is so desperate, it is said, no excitement so tremendous, as that of the short, fierce, reckless gallop in the chase where bird hunts bird through the boundless fields of air. Not even the tremendous burst and rally of the glorious hunts-up, with the heart-inspiring crash of the hounds, and the merry blare of the bugles, when the hart of grease has broken covert, and the pack are running him breast high.

In the latter, the heart may beat, the pulse may throb and quiver, but the eye is unoccupied, and free to direct the hand, to rule the courser's gallop, and mark the coming leap. In the former, the eye, as the heart, and the pulse, and the ear, are all bent aloft, up! up! with the straining, towering birds; while the steed must pick its own way over smooth or rough, and the rider take his leaps as they chance to come, unseen and unexpected. Such was the glorious mystery of Rivers!

The wind, what little of it there was when the heron rose, was from the southward, and the bird flew before it directly toward the cottage of Kenric, rising slowly but strongly into the upper regions of air. The two falcons, which were nearly half a mile astern of the quarry when they were cast off, flew almost, as it seemed, with the speed of lightning, in parallel lines about fifty yards apart, rising as he rose, and evidently gaining on him at every stroke of their long, sharp pinions, in pursuit. And in pursuit of those, their riders sitting well back in their saddles, and holding them hard by the head, the high-blooded horses tore across the marshy plain, driving fragments of turf high into the air at every stroke, and sweeping over the drains and water-courses which obstructed their

career, like the unbridled wind. It was a glorious spectacle—a group of incomparable splendor, in coloring, in grace, in vivacity, motion, fire, sweeping through that panorama of magnificent mountain scenery.

The day was clear and sunny, the skies soft and transparently blue; but, ever and anon, huge clouds came driving over the scene, casting vast purple-shadows over the green meadows and the mirrored lake. One of these now came sweeping overhead, and toward it towered the contending birds. The heron, when he saw that he was pursued, uttered a louder and harsher cry, and began to scale the sky in great aërial circles. Silent, in smaller circles, towered the falcons, each emulous to out-top the others. Up! up! higher and higher! Neither victorious yet, neither vanquished. Now! now! the falcons are on a level with him, and again rings the clanging shriek of the wild water-bird, and he redoubles his last effort. He rises, he out-tops the hawks, and all vanish in an instant from the eyes of the pursuers, swallowed up in the depths of the great golden cloud.

Still the harsh clanking cry is heard; and now, as they and the cloud still drift northward, they reappear, now all descending, above the little esplanade before the cottage-door where Edith stands watching.

The heron is below, falling plumb through the air with his back downward, his wings flapping at random, his long neck trussed on his breast, and his sharp bill projecting upward, perilous as the point of a Moorish assagay. The falcons both above him, towering for the swoop, Aradas' Helvellyn the topmost.

He pointed to the birds with his riding-rod triumphantly,

and glancing an arch look at his mistress, "Helvellyn has it," he said; "Palestine or no Palestine, on the stoop!"

"On the hawks!" she replied; "and heaven decide it!"

"I will wear the glove in my casque in the first career," and, as he spoke, the falcon closed his wings and came down with a swoop like lightning on the devoted quarry. The rush of his impetuous plunge, cleaving the air, was clearly audible, above the rustling of the leaves and the noise of the pursuers.

But the gallant heron met the shock unflinching, and Helvellyn, gallant Helvellyn, came down like a catapult upon the deadly beak of the fierce wader, and was impaled from breast to back in a second. There was a minute of wild convulsive fluttering, and then the heron shook off his assailant, who drifted slowly down, writhing and struggling, with all his beauteous plumes disordered and bedropped with gore, to the dull earth, while, with a clang of triumph, the victor once more turned to rise heavenward.

The cry of triumph was premature, for, even as it was uttered, brave Diamond made his stoop. Swift and sure as the bolt of Heaven, he found his aim, and, burying his keen singles to the sheath in the back of the tortured waterfowl, clove his skull at a single stroke of the trenchant bill.

"Hurrah! hurrah! brave Diamond," cried the delighted girl. "No Palestine! no Palestine! For this, your bells and jesses shall be of gold, beautiful Diamond, and your drink of the purest wine of Gascony."

And, giving head to her jennet, the first of all the train she reached the spot where the birds lay struggling on the grass within ten yards of Kenric's door, and, as she sprang from her saddle, was caught in the arms of Edith.

"God's blessings on you! welcome! welcome! dearest lady," cried the beautiful Saxon, raining down tears of gratitude.

"Thanks, Edith; but, quick! quick! help me save the falcon, lest the heronshaw hurt him. My life was at stake on his flight, and he has saved my life!"

"The heronshaw is dead enough, lady, he will hurt nothing more," said the Saxon, following her lady, nevertheless, to secure the gallant gosshawk, which in a moment sat pluming his ruffled feathers, and glaring at her triumphantly with his clear golden eye, as he arched his proud neck to her caresses, on the wrist of his fair mistress.

It seemed as though he knew that he had won her wager.

The hour of the noonday meal had now fully arrived, and the sumpter mules were soon brought up, and carpets spread on the turf, and flasks and barrels, pasties and brawns, and huge boars' heads unpacked in tempting profusion, and all preparations made for a meal in the open air.

But Edith pleaded so hard that her dear lady, to whom she owed more than life, whom she loved more than her own life, would honor her humble roof, would suffer the choicest of the viands to be borne into her pleasant, sunny room, and taste her home-brewed mead, that Guendolen, who was in rapture at her triumph, readily consented, and Aradas, who was pleased to see Guendolen happy, made no opposition.

So, while amid loud merriment, and the clang of flasks and beakers, and the clash of knives and trenchers, their train fared jovially and lustily without, they feasted daintily and happily within the Saxon's cottage.

And the sunny room was pleasant; and the light played

cheerfully on the polished pewter trenchers on the dresser, and the varnished holly and scarlet berries, and bright wild-flowers on the wall; and the sparkling wood fire was not amiss after the gallop in the clear air; and Guendolen preferred the light, foaming mead of the Saxon housewife, to the wines of Gascony and Bordeaux; and all went happily and well.

Above all, Edith gained her point. She got occasion to tell the tale of Eadwulf's flight, arrival, and departure, and obtained a promise of protection for her husband, in case he should be brought in question for his share in his brother's escape; and even prevailed that no search should be made after Eadwulf, provided he would keep himself aloof, and commit no offense against the pitiless forest laws, or depredations on the people of the dales.

Many strange emotions of indignation, sympathy, horror, alternately swept through the mind of Guendolen, and were reflected from her eloquent eyes; and many times did Aradas twirl his thick mustache, and gripe his dagger's hilt, as they heard the vicissitudes of that strange tale—the base and dastardly murder of the noble and good Sir Philip de Morville; the slaying of the bailiff by the hand of Eadwulf, which thus came to look liker to lawful retribution than to mere homicide; the strange chances of the serf's escape; the wonderful wiles by which he had baffled the speed of horses and the scent of bloodhounds; and the final catastrophe of the sands, swallowing up, as it would seem, well-nigh all the slaughterers of Sir Philip, while sparing the panting and heart-broken fugitive. It was indeed a tale more strange and horrible than any thing, save truth.

They sat some time in silence, musing. Then suddenly, as by an impulse, their eyes met. Their meaning was the same.

"Yes!" he said, bowing his head gravely, in answer to what he read in her look, "there may be an occasion, and a very noble one."

"And for such an one, I will bind my glove on your casque, and buckle your sword to your side very gladly."

"Amen!" said he. "Be it as God wills. He will defend the right."

So, bidding their pretty hostess adieu, not leaving her without a token of their visit and good-will, they mounted and rode homeward, thinking no more of the sport; graver, perhaps, and more solemn in their manner; but, on the whole, happier and more hopeful than when they set forth in the morning.

And Edith, though she understood nothing of the impulses of their hearts, was grateful and content; and when her husband returned home, and, hanging about his neck, she told him what she had done, and how she had prospered, and received his approbation and caresses, was that night the happiest woman within the four seas that gird Britain.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ARREST.

Count. If thou be he, then thou art prisoner.
Tal. Prisoner to whom?

SHAKESPEARE.

FOR several days after the visit of the Lady Guendolen and her lover to the house of the verdurer of Kentmere, rumors, many of which had been afloat since the catastrophe on the sands, began to increase among the dalesmen, of strangers seen at intervals among the hills or in the scattered hamlets, seeming to observe every thing, but themselves carefully avoiding observation, asking many questions, but answering none, and leaving a general impression on the minds of all who saw them, that they were thus squandered, as it were, through the lake country, as spies, probably of some marauding band, but certainly with no good intent. These individuals bore no sort of resemblance, it was said, or affinity one to the other, nor seemed to have any league of community between them, yet there was an unanimous sentiment, wherever they came and went, which they ordinarily did in succession, that they were all acting on a common plan and with a common purpose, however dissimilar might be their garb, their occupation, or their immediate purpose. And widely dissimilar these were—for one of those suspected was in ex-

pearance a maimed beggar, displaying the scallop-shell of St. James of Compostella, in token that he had crossed the seas for his soul's good, and vowing that he had lost his left arm in a sanguinary conflict with the Saracens, who were besieging Jerusalem, in the valley of Jehoshaphat; a second was a dashing pedler, with gay wares for the village maidens, and costlier fabrics—lawns from Cyprus, and silks and embroideries of Ind, for the taste of nobler wearers; another seemed a mendicant friar, though of what order it was not by any means so evident, since, his tonsure excepted, his apparel gave token of very little else than raggedness and filth.

Nearly a week had passed thus, when, at a late hour in the afternoon, word was conveyed to the castle of Sir Yvo, under Hawkshead, by the bailiff, in person, of the little town of Kendal, which lay about midway between Kentmere and the bay, that a small body of horse, completely armed, having at their head a gentleman apparently of rank, had entered the town about mid-day, demanded quarters for the night for man and horse, and sent out one or two unarmed riders, as if to survey the country. In any part of England traversed by great roads, this would have created no wonder or surmise; for hundreds of such parties were to be seen on the great thoroughfares every day, few persons at that period journeying without weapons of offense and arms defensive, and gentlemen of rank being invariably attended by bodies of armed retainers, which were indeed rendered indispensable by the prevalence of private feuds and personal hostilities which were never wholly at an end between the proud barons, whose conterminous lands were constant cause of unneighborly bickerings and strife.

In these wild rural districts, however, it was quite different, where the roads merely gave access and egress to the country lying below the mountains, but opened no thoroughfare either for trade or travel, there being no means of approach from that side, even to Penrith or Carlisle, already towns of considerable magnitude, lying but a few miles distant across the vast and gloomy fells and mountains, except by the blindest of paths, known only to shepherds and outlaws, leading through tremendous passes, such as that terrible defile of Dunmailraise, famous to this day for its stern and savage grandeur. Hence it came, that, unless it were visitors to some of the few castles or priories in the lower valleys, such as Furness Abbey, Calder Abbey, Lannercost Priory, Gleaston Castle, the stronghold of the Flemings, Rydal, the splendid manor of the Ratcliffes, this fortalice of De Taillebois, at Hawkshead, and some strong places of the Dacres and Cliffords, yet farther to the east, not constituting in the whole a dozen within a circumference of fifty miles, no strangers were ever seen in these secluded valleys, without exciting wonder, and something of consternation.

So it was in this instance; and so urgent did it appear to Sir Yvo, that, although he was just sitting down to supper when his officer arrived—for Kendal was his manorial town, where he held his courts, leet and baron—that he put off the evening meal an hour, until he should have heard his report, and examined into all the circumstances of the case.

Then commending his bailiff for his discretion, he dismissed him, with orders to make all speed home again, without signifying at Kendal whither he had been, to give all heed and courteous attention to the strangers, keeping ever a sharp

eye on their actions, and to expect himself in the burgh ere midnight.

This done, he returned to the hall, as calm as if nothing had occurred to move him, though he was indeed doubly moved, both as lord of the manor and sheriff of the country; and, merely whispering to Aradas to have fifty lances in the saddle within an hour, and to dispatch a messenger to have the horse-boats ready on the lake, opposite to Bowness, took his place at the board-head, with his fair child on his right, and the young esquire on the left, and carved the roe venison and moor fowl, and jested joyously, and quaffed his modicum of the pure light wines of Gascony, as if he had nothing on hand that night beyond a walk on the battlements, before retiring. So soon, however, as supper was over, he bade his page go up to his private apartment, and bidding Aradas look sharp, for there was little time to lose, he told Guendolen, with a smile, that he should make her chatelaine for the night, since he must ride across the lake to Kendal.

"To-night, father!" she exclaimed, astonished, "why, it is twenty miles; you will not be there before daybreak."

"Oh, yes, by midnight, girl, if we spur the sharper; and it is partly on your business that I go, too, child; for I fancy there is something afoot, that bodes no good to your friend Kenric; but we 'll nip it in the bud, we 'll nip it in the bud, by St. Agatha!"

"Ah!" said the girl, turning pale, "there will be danger, then—"

"Danger!" said the old knight, looking at her sharply, "danger, not a whit of it! It is but that villain d'Oilly, with a score of spears of Sherwood. I must take fifty lances with

me, for, as sheriff, I must keep peace without spear-breaking; were it not for that, I would meet him spear to spear; and he should reckon with me, too, for poor Sir Philip, ere we parted, as he shall do yet, one day, although I see not how to force him to it. So now, kiss me, silly minion, and to bed with you while I go arm me."

And the stout old warrior strode up to his cabinet, whence he descended in half an hour, armed *cap-a-pie* in chain mail, plate armor not having yet come into use, with his flat-topped casque on his head, his heater-shaped shield hung about his neck, and his huge, two-handed sword crossing his whole person, its cross-hilt appearing above his left shoulder, and its tip clashing against the spur on his right heel. As he entered the court of the castle, his men were all in their saddles, sitting firm as pillars of steel, each with his long lance secured by its sling and the socket attached to the stirrup, bearing a tall waxen torch in his right hand, making their mail-coats flash and twinkle in the clear light, as if they were compact of diamonds. Aradas was alone dismounted, holding the stirrup for his lord until he had mounted, when he sprang, all armed as he was, into the saddle. The banner-man at once displayed the square banner of his lord, the trumpeter made the old ramparts ring with the old gathering blast of the house of De Taillebois, and, two and two, the glittering men-at-arms, defiled through the castle gate, and wound down the steep hill side, long to be traced from the battlements, now seen, now lost among the woods and coppices, a line of sinuous light, creeping, like a huge glow-worm, over the dark champaign.

Before they reached the lake shore, however, the moon

rose, round and red, from behind the Yorkshire fells; and, extinguishing their flambeaux, they pricked rapidly forward through the country, which, intricate as it was, soon became as light as at noonday.

On the other side of the lake, circumstances of a very different nature, though arising from the same causes, were occurring. Early in the afternoon, while Kenric was absent on his rounds, a single rider, plainly clad, and unarmed, except his sword, made his appearance, riding up the valley from the direction of Kendal, and soon pulling up at the cottage, inquired the road to Rydal. Then, on being informed that there was no pass through the hills in that direction, and that he ought to have turned off to the eastward, through a gap five miles below, he asked permission to dismount and rest himself and his horse awhile, a favor which Edith readily conceded. Oat cakes and cheese, then, as now, the peculiar dainties of the dalesmen, with home-brewed mead, were set before him, his horse was fed, and every act of hospitality which could be done to the most honored guest was extended to him.

He observed every thing, noted every thing, especially the crossbow which Eadwulf had brought with him on his late inopportune arrival, learned the name and station of his entertainer, and how he was the tenant of the Lord of Hawkshead, Yewdale, Coniston, and Kentmere, and verdurer of the forest in which he dwelt; and then, offering money, which was refused, mounted his horse, and rode back toward Kendal more rapidly then he came.

So soon as Kenric returned from his rounds, he was informed of all that had passed, when, simply observing, "Ha!

it has come already, has it? I scarce expected it so soon," he bade one of the boys get the pony ready, and prepare himself to go round the lake to the castle, and then sat down with his wife to the evening meal, which she had prepared for him.

When they were alone, "Now, Edith, my dear," he said, "the time has come for which we have been so long waiting. I know for certain that Sir Foulke d'Oilly is in Kendal, and our good lord will know it likewise before this time. Therefore there is no danger that will not be prevented almost before it is begun. That I shall be taken, either by violence or by legal arrest, this night, is certain—though I think probably by violence, since no true caption may be made after sunset."

"Then, why not escape at once?" asked his fair wife, opening her great blue eyes wider than their wont. "Why not go straight to the castle, and place yourself in my lord's safeguard?"

"For two reasons, wife of mine, each in itself sufficient. First, this is my post, and I must hold it, until removed or forced from it. Second, my lord deems it best I should be taken now, and the matter ended. But this applies not to you or my mother. The Normans must find neither of you here; no woman, young or old, is safe where Foulke d'Oilly's men are about. You must wrap the old woman as warm as you may, and have her off on the pony to Ambleside as quickly as may be. Ralph shall go with you. I am on thorns and nettles until you are gone."

"I will never leave you, Kenric. It is useless to speak of it—never!"

"Oh! yes, you will, Edith," he answered, quietly. "Oh! yes, you will, for half a dozen reasons; though one is enough, for that matter. First, you will not see my mother dead through your obstinacy. Second, you will not stay to be outraged yourself, before my very eyes, without my having power to aid you—"

"Kenric!"

"It is mere truth, Edith. Thirdly, it is your duty to go; and last, it is my will that you go, and I never knew you refuse that."

"Nor ever will, Kenric; though it break my heart to do it."

"Tush! tush! girl; hearts are tough things, and do not break so easily; and when you kiss me to-morrow at the castle, you 'll think of this no more. See, here 's the boy with the pony and the pillion. Now, hurry, and coax my mother out, and get on your cloak and wimple, that 's a good lass. I would not have you here when Foulke d'Oilly's riders come, no! not to be the Lord of Kentmere. Hurry! hurry!"

Many minutes had not passed, before, after a long embrace, and a flood of tears on the part of Edith, the two women mounted on the sturdy pony, the wife in the saddle, and the aged mother seated on a sort of high-backed pillion—made like the seat of an arm-chair—and secured by a broad belt to the waist of her daughter, took their way across the wooded hills toward Ambleside, the boy Ralph leading the animal by the head, and two brace of noble alans, his master's property, which Kenric did not choose to expose to the cupidity of his expected captors, gamboling in front, or following gravely at heel, according to their various qualities of age and temper.

The son and husband gazed after them wistfully, so long as they remained in sight; and when, as they crossed the last ridge of the low intermediate hills which divide the narrow glen of the upper Kent from the broader dale of Windermere, standing out in bold relief against the strong light of the western sky, Edith waved her kerchief, he drew his hard hand across his brow, turned into his desolate dwelling, and, sitting down by the hearth, was soon lost in gloomy meditation.

Darkness soon fell over lake and meadow, mountain and upland. Hundreds of stars were twinkling in the clear sky, to which a touch of frost, not unusual at this early season among those hill regions, had lent an uncommon brilliance, but the moon had not yet risen.

Kenric was now becoming restless and impatient, and, as is frequently the case when we are awaiting even the most painful things, which we know to be inevitable, he soon found himself wishing that the time would come, that he might know the worst, and feeling that the suspense was worse than almost any reality.

Several times he went to the door, and stood gazing down the valley, over the brown woods and gray, glimmering waters, to look and listen, if he might discover any signs of the coming danger. But his eyes could penetrate but a little way into the darkness, and no sounds came to his ears, but the deep sough of the west wind among the pine boughs of the mountain top, the hoarse ripple of the brook brawling against the boulders which lay scattered in its bed, and the hooting of the brown owls, answering each other from every ivy-bush and holly-brake on the wooded hill-sides.

Nothing could be more calm or peaceful than the scene, nothing less indicative of man's presence, much more of his violence and angry passions. Not even the baying of a solitary house-dog awoke the echoes, though oftentimes the wild, yelping bark of the fox came sharp from the moorland, and once the long-drawn howl of a wolf, that most hideous and unmistakable of savage cries, wailed down the pass like the voice of a spirit, ominous of evil.

The hunter's spirit was aroused in the watcher by the familiar sound. He listened intently, but it was heard no more, and, shaking his head, he muttered to himself, "He is up in the dark corrie under Norton pike; I noted the wool and bones of lambs, and the spoil of hares there, when I was last through it, but I laid the scathe to the foxes. I knew not we had a wolf so nigh us. Well, if they trap not me to-night, I'll see and trap that other thief to-morrow. And thinking of that, since they come not, I trow there is no courtesy compels me to sit up for them, and there's some thing in my head now that chimes a later hour than vespers. I'll take a night-cap, and lay me down on the settle. Gilbert, happy dog, has been asleep there on the hearth these two hours;" and, suiting the action to the word, he drew a mighty flagon of mead, quaffed it to the dregs, and, throwing a heavy wooden bar across the door, wrapped his cloak about him, and, casting himself on a settle in the chimney corner, was soon buried in deep slumber.

When he woke again, which he did with a sudden start, the moon was shining brightly through the latticed casements, and there were sounds on the air which he easily recognized as the clash of mail coats and the tramp of horses,

coming up at a trot over the stony road. Looking out from a loop beside the door, he perceived at once that the moment he expected had arrived. Ten men, heavily armed, but wearing dark-colored surcoats over their mail, and having their helmets cased with felt, to prevent their being discovered by the glimmering of the steel in the moonlight, had ridden up to the foot of the little knoll on which the cottage stood, and were now concerting their future movements.

While he gazed, nine of the men dismounted, linking their horses, and leaving them in charge of the tenth. Four then filed off to keep watch, and prevent escape from the rear, or either end of the building; and then, at a given signal, the others marched up to the door, and the leader struck heavily on the pannel with the haft of a heavy battle-ax, crying, "Open! on pain of death! open!"

"To whom? What seek you?" asked Kenric, whose hand was on the bar.

"To me, Foulke d'Oilly. I seek my fugitive villeyn, Eadwulf the Red. We have traced him hither. Open, on your peril, or take the consequence."

"The man is not here; natheless, I open," replied Kenric; and, with the word, he threw open the door; and the men-at-arms rushed in, brandishing their axes, as if they expected resistance. But the Saxon stood firm, tranquil, and impassive, on his hearthstone, and gave no pretext for violence.

"And who may you be, sirrah," cried the leader, checking the rudeness of his vassals for the moment, "who brave us thus?"

"Far be it from me," said he, "to brave a nobleman. I am a free Saxon man, Kenric, the son of Werewulf, tenant in

fee to my Lord of Taillebois, and his verdurer and forester for this his manor of Kentmere."

"Thou liest," said one of the men-at-arms. "Thou art Eadwulf the Red, born thrall of Sir Philip de Morville, on his manor of Waltheofstow, and now of Sir Foulke d'Oilly, who has succeeded to the same."

"Thou liest!" replied Kenric, stoutly. "And I will prove it on thy body, with permission of Sir Foulke d'Oilly, with quarterstaff or gisarme, battleax or broadsword."

"Art sure this is he, Damian? Canst swear to the man? Is there any other here, who knows the features of the fellow Eadwulf, to witness them on oath? Light yonder cresset from the embers on the hearth; advance it to his face! Now, can you swear to him?"

The torch was thrust so rudely and so closely into his face, that it actually singed his beard; yet he started not, nor flinched a hair's breadth.

"I can," said the man who had first spoken, stubbornly. "That is Eadwulf the Red. I have seen him fifty times in the late Sir Philip's lifetime; and last, the day before he fled and slew your bailiff of Waltheofstow in the forest between Thurgoland and Bolterstone, in September. I will swear to him, as I live by bread, and hope to see Paradise."

"And I," exclaimed another of the men, after examining his features, whether deceived by the real similitude between them and his brother, which did amount to a strong family likeness, though the color of the hair and the expression of the two men were wholly dissimilar, or only desirous of gratifying his leader. "I know him as well as I do my own brother. I will swear to him any where."

"You would both swear falsely," said Kenric, coolly. "Eadwulf is my brother, son of Werewulf, son of Beowulf, once henchman to Waltheof, of Waltheofstow, and a free Saxon man before the Conquest."

"I will swear to him, also," cried a third man, who had snatched down the fatal crossbow and bolts from above the chimney. "Kenric and Eadwulf are but two names for one man; and here is the proof. This crossbow, with the name Kenric burned into the stock, is that which Eadwulf carried on the day when he fled; and these quarrels tally, point for point, with those which were found in the carcass of the deer he slew, and in the body of the bailiff he murdered!"

"Ha! What say you to that, sirrah?"

"That it is my crossbow; that my name is Kenric, by-named the Dark; that I am, as I said before, a free Saxon, and have dwelt here on Kentmere since the last days of July; so that I could have slain neither deer nor bailiff, between Thurgoland and Bolterstone, in September. That is all I have to say, Sir Foulke."

"And that is nothing," he replied. "So thou must go along with us. Wilt go peaceably, too, if thou art wise, and cravest no broken bones."

"Have you a writ of *Neifty** for me, Sir Foulke?" asked Kenric, respectfully, having been instructed by Sir Yvo.

"Tush! dog, what knowest thou of *Neifty?* No, sirrah, I seize mine villeyn, of mine own right, with mine own hand. What sayst to that?"

"That you must seize me, to seize justly, by the sheriff; and I deny the villeynage, and claim trial."

* *De Nativo Habendo.*—Howell's State Trials, 38, note.

"And I send you, and your denial, and your *Neifty*, to the fiend who hatched them. You are my slave, my born slave; and in my dungeons of Waltheofstow will I prove it to you. Hugo, Raoul, Damian, seize him, handcuff his wrists behind him, drag him along if he resist."

"I resist not," said Kenric. "I yield to force, as I hold you all to witness; you above all, Gilbert," addressing the boy who stood staring, half-awake, while they were manacling his hands. "But I pray you, Sir Foulke, to take notice that in this you do great wrong to my good lord, Sir Yvo de Taillebois, both that he is the Lord of Hawkshead, Coniston, and Yewdale, and of this manor of Kentmere on which you now trespass, and that he is the sheriff of these counties of Lancaster and Westmoreland, where you wrongfully seize jurisdiction. And this I notify you, that he will seek the right at your hands, and that speedily."

"Dog! Saxon! slave! dirt of the earth! do you dare threaten me?" cried the fierce baron, purposely lashing himself into fury; and he strode up to the helpless man, whose arms were secured behind his back, and smote him in the mouth with his gauntleted-hand, that the blood gushed from his lips, and streamed over all the front of his leathern hunting-shirt.

"That, to teach thee manners. Now, then, bring him along, men; set him on the black gelding, chain his legs fast under the brute's belly, ride one of you at each side, and dash his brains out with your axes if he look like escaping. Away! away! I would be at Kendal before they ring the prime,*

* Prime was the first service, and began the instant midnight had sounded.

and at Lonsdale before matins.* So shall we be well among the Yorkshire fells before daybreak."

His words were obeyed without demur or delay, and within five minutes the Saxon was chained on the back of a vicious, ill-conditioned brute, with a savage ruffian on either side, glaring at him through the bars of their visors, as if they desired no better than a chance to brain him, in obedience with orders; and the whole party, their horses being quite fresh, were thundering down the dale at a pace that would bring them to Kendal long enough before midnight.

* Matins was the second service, at 3 A. M.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SHERIFF.

"The Sheriff, with a monstrous watch, is at the door."
KING HENRY IV.

Two hours' hard riding, considering that the riders were men armed in heavy mail, brought the party into the narrow, ill-paved streets of Kendal, at least two hours earlier than the time specified by Sir Foulke d'Oilly, and it was not above ten o'clock of the night when they pulled up before a long, low, thatched cabin, above the door of which, a bush and a bottle, suspended from a pole, gave note that it was a house of entertainment. Flinging his rein to one of half-a-dozen grooms and horse-boys, who were lounging about the gate, the knight raised the latch, and entered a long, smoky apartment, which seemed to occupy the whole ground floor of the building, affording room for the accommodation of fifty or sixty guests, on occasion of feasts, fairs, or holidays.

It was an area of thirty or forty feet in length, by ten or twelve in width, with bare rough-cast walls, and bare rafters overhead, blackened by the smoke which escaped from the ill-constructed chimneys at either end, and eddied overhead in a perennial canopy of sable. The floor, however, was strewed

with fresh green rushes, green wreaths and branches were hung on the rough-cast walls, and a large earthen-vase or two of water-lilies and other showy wild-flowers adorned the board, which was covered with clean white napery of domestic fabric. At the upper end of this long table, half-a-dozen or eight men were supping on a chine of hill-kid, with roasted moor-fowl and wild-ducks, the landlord of the tavern being the bailiff of the town, and having his lord's license to take all small game, save bustard, heron, woodcock, and pheasant, for the benefit of his guest-table.

On the entrance of Sir Foulke, these men rose to their feet; and one, the best-armed and best-looking of the party, seeming to be a second esquire or equerry, asked him, in a subdued voice—

"What fortune, Sir Foulke; have you got the villeyn?"

"Safe enough, Fitz Hugh," replied the knight; "but he is no mere brute, as you fellows told me, but a perilous, shrewd, intelligent, clear-headed Saxon. He has been advised, too, in this matter, by some one well-skilled in the law, and was, I think, expecting our coming. I should not marvel much, if De Taillebois have notice of us. We must be in the saddle again as soon as possible. But I must have a morsel ere we start; I have not tasted aught since high-noon, and then it was but a beggarly oat-cake and a flask of mead. What have you there?"

"Some right good treble ale, beausire; let me fill you a tankard, and play cup-bearer for once." And, suiting the action to the word, he filled out a mighty horn of the liquid amber, capped with its snowy foam, and handed it to the knight, adding, "The supper is but fragments, but there is

more at the fire now. I will go to the stables, and see the fresh horses saddled and caparisoned; and as I pass the buttery and tap, I will stir up the loitering knaves."

"Do so, Fitz Hugh," replied the other; "but hasten, Jesu Maria! hasten! I reckon but half done until we are out of this beggarly hole, and under way for merry Yorkshire. And hark you, Fitz Hugh, let them bring in the prisoner. We must have him along with us; and ten of the best men, lightly armed, and mounted on the pick of our stud. Ten more may tarry with the tired beasts we have just used, and bring them on with the baggage and sumpter horses to-morrow."

Then, as his officer left the hall to attend to his multifarious duties, he quaffed another huge flagon of the strong, heady ale; and, casting himself into a settle in the chimney-corner, what between the warmth of the fire, grateful after his hard ride in the chilly night air, and the fumes of the heady tankard, he sunk into a doze, from which he only aroused himself, when, half an hour afterward, in came a dozen clumsy village servants, stamping and clattering in their heavy-clouted shoes, and loaded the table with smoking platters and huge joints, of which, however coarse the cookery, the odors were any thing but unsavory.

To supper accordingly he now applied himself, two or three of the men who had been with him at the seizure of Kenric, crowding into the room and taking the lower end of the table, where another great fire was blazing, and others coming in and out in succession, until all were satisfied.

It is, however, remarkable, as in character with the sensual, self-indulgent, and unrestrained temperament of this most un-

worthy and unknightly Norman, his race being, of all the northern tribes, that least addicted to gluttony and drunkenness, and priding itself on moderation and decorum at the table, that, notwithstanding his earnest desire to depart from his somewhat perilous situation, he yet yielded to his appetites, and lingered over the board, though it offered nothing beyond coarse viands and strong ale, long after the horses were announced to be in readiness.

At length he rose, washed his hands, and calling his page to replace such portions of his armor as he had laid aside, was preparing to move in earnest, when the well-known clash of mail-coats and the thick trampling of a numerous squadron coming up the village street gave notice that he was surprised.

The next moment, a man-at-arms rushed into the room, with dismay in his face.

"Lances, my Lord of d'Oilly," he cried; "lances and a broad banner! There are full fifty of them coming up the street from the northward, and some of the grooms who were on the out-look report more spears to the south. We are surrounded."

"Call in the men hither from the stables, then; let them cut short their lances to six feet, and bring their maces and battle-axes; we can make a stout stand here, and command good terms at the worst."

Time, however, was short, and his orders were but partially obeyed, the men coming in by twos and threes from the stables in the rear, looking gloomy and dispirited, when a trumpet was blown clearly without, and, the cavalcade halting,

in mass, in front of the hostelry, a fine deep voice was heard to cry;

"What men be these? Who dare lift spears, or display banners, in my town of Kendal, without license of me?"

"It is De Taillebois," said D'Oilly; "it avails nothing to resist. Throw the doors open."

But, as he spoke, the reply of his lieutenant was heard to the summons;

"We be Sir Foulke d'Oilly's men, and we dare lift spear and display banner, wheresoever our lord order us."

"Well said, good fellow!" answered the powerful voice of the old knight. "Go in, therefore, and tell your lord that the Sheriff of Lancaster is at the door, with fifty lances, to inforce the king's peace; and that he draw in his men at once, or ere worse come of it, and show cause what he makes here, in effeir of war, in my manor of Kendal, and the king's county of Westmoreland."

D'Oilly set his teeth hard, and smote the table with his gauntleted hand. "Curses on him," he muttered, "he hath me at advantage." Then, as he received the summons, "Pray the Lord of Taillebois," he said; "he will have the courtesy to set foot to ground, and enter in hither, that we hold conference."

Again the voice was heard without, "Ride to the bridge, Huon, at the town end, and call me Aradas."

There was a short pause, and then, as the gallop of a horse was heard coming up to the house, the orders were given to dismount, link bridles, and close up to the doors; and at the next instant, Sir Yvo entered, stooping his tall crest to pass the low-browed door, followed by his trusty squire, Aradas de

Ratcliffe, and half-a-dozen others of his principal retainers, one or two of them wearing knightly crests upon their burgonets.

The first words the knight uttered, as he raised his avantaille and gazed about him, were "St. Agatha, how hot it is, and what a reek of peat-smoke and ale! Open those windows, some of you, to the street, and let us have a breath of heaven's fresh air. The Lord, he knows we need it."

In a moment, the thick-wooden shutters and lattices, which had been closed by those within on the first alarm of his coming, were cast wide open, and the spaces were filled at once by the stalwart forms and resolute faces of the men-at-arms of De Taillebois, in such numbers as to render treachery impossible, if it had been intended.

Then, for the first time, did Sir Yvo turn his eyes toward the intruder, who stood at the farther end of the hall, irresolute how to act, with his men clustered in a sullen group behind him, and the prisoner Kenric held firmly by the shoulders by two stout troopers.

"Ha! Sir Foulke d'Oilly," he said, with a slight inclination of his head. "To what do I owe the honor of receiving that noble baron in my poor manor of Kendal; and wherefore, if he come in courtesy and peace, do I not meet him rather in my own castle of Hawkshead, where I might show him fitting courtesy, than in this smoky den, fitter for Saxon churls than Norman nobles?"

"To be brief, my lord," replied d'Oilly, with a voice half conciliatory, half defiant, "I came neither in enmity, nor yet in courtesy, but to reclaim and seize my fugitive villeyn yonder, Eadwulf the Red, who hath not only killed deer in my

chase of Fenton in the Forest, but hath murdered my bailiff of Waltheofstow, and now hath fled from me, against my will; and I find him here, hidden in an out corner of this your manor of Kentmere, in Kendal."

"There is some error here, Sir Foulke," said De Taillebois, firmly. "That man, whom I see some one hath brutally misused, of which more anon, is not called Eadwulf at all, but Kenric. Nor is he your serf, fair sir, nor any man's serf at all, or villeyn, but a free Englishman, as any who stands on this floor. I myself purchased and manumitted him in this July last past, for that he saved the life of my child, the Lady Guendolen, at risk of his own. Of this I pledge my honor, as belted knight and Norman noble."

"I know the fellow very well, Sir Yvo," answered the other, doggedly. "Four or five of my men here can swear to the knave; and we have proof positive that he is the man who shot a deer about daybreak, and murdered my bailiff on the thirteenth day of September last, in my forest between the meres of Thurgoland and Bolterstone, in Sherwood."

"The thirteenth day of last September?" said De Taillebois, thoughtfully. "Ha! Aradas, Fitz Adhelm, was't not on that day we ran the big mouse-colored hart royal, with the black talbots, from high Yewdale, past Grisdale pike, to the skirts of Skiddaw?"

"Surely it was, Sir Yvo," answered both the gentlemen in a breath.

"There is some error here, Sir Foulke," repeated the Sheriff, "but the law will decide it. And now, speaking of the law, Sir Baron, may I crave, by what right, or form of law, you have laid hands on this man, within the jurisdiction

of my manor, and under the shadow of night? I say, by what warrant have you done this?"

"By the same right, and form, and warrant, by which, wherever I find my stolen goods, there I seize them! By the best law of right; that is, the law of might."

"The law of might has failed you, for this time, Sir Foulke."

"That is to say, you being stronger, at this present time, than I, will not allow me to carry off my villeyn, whom I have justly seized."

"Whom you have most unjustly, most illegally, seized, Sir Foulke. You know, as well as I, or ought to know, that if you proceed by seizure, it must be upon oath; and none can seize within this shire, but I, the sheriff of it. Or if you proceed by writ *de nativo habendo*, no one can serve that writ, within this shire, but I, the sheriff of it. What! when a man can not seize and sell an ox or an ass, that is claimed by another, without due process of law, shall he seize and take, that which is the dearest thing any man hath, even as dear as the breath of his nostrils, his right to himself, his liberty, without any form at all? No, Sir Foulke, no! Our English law presumes every man free, till he be proved a slave; and no man, who claims freedom, can be deprived of freedom, no, not by my lord the King himself in counsel, except upon the verdict of an English jury. But do I understand aright? Does this man Eadwulf, or Kenric, claim to be free, or confess himself to be a villeyn?"

"I claim to be a freeman, Sir Yvo; and I demand liberty to prove it," cried Kenric. "I warned Sir Foulke d'Oilly, when he seized me in my cottage by Kentmere, as I can prove

by the boy Gilbert, that I am a freeman, and that were I a villeyn and a fugitive, to make a true seizure, it must be made by the sheriff."

"Ha! thou didst—didst thou. Thou art learned in the law, it seems."

"It behooves an Englishman, beausire, to know the law by which to guard his liberty, seeing that it is the dearest thing he hath, under Heaven. But I am not learned; only I had good advice."

"So it seems. And you deny to be a villeyn, and claim to prove your liberty?"

"Before God, I do, and your worship."

"Summon my bailiff, Aradas; he is a justice of peace for the county, and will tell us what is needed. I will give you this benefit, Sir Foulke, though you are in no wise entitled to it. Because it is on my own ground, and on the person of my own man, you have made this seizure, I will allow it to stand good, as if made legally, in due form. Had it been made elsewhere, within the county, I would have held it null, and committed you for false imprisonment, and breach of the King's peace. But no man shall say I avenge my own private griefs by power of my office. Now, bailiff, art thou there?"

"So please you, Sir Yvo, I have been here all the evening, and am possessed of the whole case."

"Well, then, what needs this man Kenric?"

"A writ, my lord, *de libertate probanda.* I have it here, ready."

"Recite it to us then, in God's name, and make service of it; for I am waxing weary of this matter."

Thus exhorted, the bailiff lifted up his voice and read, pom-

pously but distinctly, the following form; and then, bowing low, handed it to the sheriff, calling on two of the men-at-arms, whose names were subscribed, to witness the service:

"King Henry II. to the Sheriff of Lancaster and Westmoreland, greeting—Kenric, the son of Werewulf, of Kentmere, in Westmoreland, has showed to us, that whereas he is a free man, and ready to prove his liberty, Sir Foulke d'Oilly, knight and baron of Waltheofstow and Fenton in the Forest of Sherwood, in Yorkshire, claiming him to be his nief, unjustly vexes him; and therefore we command you, that if the aforesaid Kenric shall make you secure touching the proving of his liberty, then put that plea before our justices, at the first assizes, when they shall come into those parts, to wit, in our good city of Lancaster, on the first day of December next ensuing, because proof of this kind belongeth not to you to take; and in the mean time cause the said Kenric to have peace thereupon, and tell the aforesaid Sir Foulke d'Oilly that he may be there, if he will, to prosecute thereof, against the aforesaid Kenric. And have there this writ.

"*Witness:* { William Fitz Adhelm.
Hugo Le Norman.

"This tenth day of October, in the year of Grace, 1184. Kendal, county of Westmoreland."

"Well, there is a bail-bond needed, is there not, bailiff?"

"It is here, sir. William Fitz Adhelm, knight, and Aradas de Ratcliffe, esquire, both of the county of Westmoreland, are herein bound, jointly and severally, in the sum of two thousand marks, that Kenric, as aforesaid, shall appear at the Lan-

caster assizes next ensuing, and show cause why he is a freeman, and not a villeyn, as claimed, of Sir Foulke d'Oilly, as aforesaid. This is according to the law of England, and Kenric may go his way until the time of the assize, none hindering him in his lawful business."

"Therefore," said Sir Yvo de Taillebois, "I will pray Sir Foulke d'Oilly to command his vassals, that they release the man Kenric forthwith, nor force me to rescue him by the strong hand."

D'Oilly, who, during all these proceedings, to which, however unwilling, he was compelled to listen without resistance, had sat on the settle in the chimney corner, in a lounging attitude, gazing into the ashes of the wood fire, and affecting to hear nothing that was passing, rose to his feet sullenly, shook himself, till every link of his mail clashed and rang, and uttered, in a tone more like the short roar of a disappointed lion than the voice of a man, the one word, "*Lachez!*" Then turning to Sir Yvo, he said—

"And now, sir, I suppose that I, too, like this Saxon cur, about whom there has been so much pother, may go about my lawful business, none hindering me."

"So much so, Sir Foulke, that if you will do me the favor to order your horses, I will mount on the instant, and escort you to the boundary of the shire. You, Kenric, tarry here with my harbinger, and get yourself into more fitting guise to return to the castle. Now, master bailiff, in quality of host, can you not find a flask of something choicer than your ale and metheglin? Ha! wine of Anjou! This will wash the cobwebs of the law out of my gullet, rarely. I was nigh choked with them, by St. Agatha! Sir Foulke, I hear your

horses stamping at the door. Will it please you, mount? It draws nigh to morning."

"I will mount," he replied fiercely, "when I am ready; and so give you short thanks for scanty courtesy."

"The less we say, I think, about courtesy, Sir Foulke d'Oilly, the better," said Sir Yvo, sternly; "for courtesy is not, nor ever can be, between us two, until I am certified how my dear friend and comrade in arms, Sir Philip de Morville, came by his death in Sherwood Forest."

The baron glared at him fiercely under the rim of his raised avantaille; then dashed the vizor down over his scowling features, that none might read their fell expression; clinched his gauntleted hand, and dashed it against the shield which hung about his neck, in impotent fury. But he spoke no word more, till they parted, without salutation or defiance, on a bare moor, where the three shires of York, Lancaster, and Westmoreland, meet, at the county stone, under the looming mountain masses of Whernside.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TRIAL.

Duke. What, is Antonio here?
Ant. Ready, so please your grace.
Duke. I am sorry for thee. Thou art come to answer
A strong adversary, an inhuman wretch.

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

THERE is nothing in all the reign of that wise, moderate, and able prince, as viewed according to the circumstances of his position and the intelligence of his era, the Second Henry of England, so remarkable, or in his character so praiseworthy, as his efforts to establish a perfect system both of judiciary power and of justice throughout England. In these efforts he more than mediately succeeded; and, although some corruptions continued to exist, and some instances of malfeasance to occur, owing in some degree to the king's own avaricious temperament and willingness to commute punishments, and perhaps, at times, even prosecutions, for pecuniary fines, justice was not for many centuries more equitably administered, certainly not four hundred years afterward, in the reign of the eighth monarch of the same Christian name, than in the latter portion of the twelfth century.

At this period, that justly celebrated lawyer, Ranulf de Glanville, was High Justiciary of England, besides holding the

especial duty of administering justice, at the head of five others, in the circuit courts of all the counties north of the Trent; and he has left it on record "that there was not now in the King's Court one judge, who dared swerve from the path of justice, or to pronounce an opinion inconsistent with truth."

During the six weeks, which intervened between the liberation of Kenric from the arrest of Sir Foulke d'Oilly, and the day appointed for the holding of the Lancaster assizes, there was great tribulation in the castle of Hawkshead; and it was known that Sir Yvo de Taillebois was in constant correspondence with the High Justiciary; flying posts were coming and going, night and day, booted and spurred, through rain or shine, from York, the present abode of Sir Ranulf, to the shores of Windermere.

The old chaplain was buried up to the eyes in old parchments and genealogies; and, to complete the mystery, Clarencieux, king-at-arms, came down to the castle, accompanied by a pursuivant, loaded with documents from the college of heralds, a fortnight before the decisive day, and tarried at the castle until the time came, no one knowing especially, save Sir Yvo, his daughter, Aradas de Ratcliffe, and the persons employed in the research, what was the matter at issue.

Necessary, however, as it was deemed, at that time, to hold the proceedings and their cause in perfect secrecy, no such reason exists now; and it may be stated that, the object being no other than to bring Sir Foulke d'Oilly to justice for the murder of Sir Philip de Morville, it was necessary to be prepared at every point.

Now, according to the criminal law of that day, no prose-

cutor could put in his charge for murder, until he should have proved himself to be of the blood of the deceased. And this it was now the object of Sir Yvo to do, there having always been a traditionary belief in a remote kindred between the two families, though the exact point and period were forgotten.

At length, in the middle of the month of October, a proclamation was issued, in the name of the King, offering a free pardon for all other offenses, with the exception of high treason and misprision of treason, and five hundred marks reward to any freeman, or freedom to any serf, who, not being a principal in the deed, should appear before the court of assize at Lancaster, on the first day of December next ensuing, and give such evidence as should result in the conviction of the murderer or murderers of the late Sir Philip de Morville, of Waltheofstow, in the county of York.

At the same time, orders were issued to Kenric, and all his associate foresters and keepers, to bring in Eadwulf, under assurance of pardon, if he might be found in any quarter; and rewards were offered to stimulate the men to exertion. But in vain. The foresters pushed their way into the deepest and wildest recesses of the Cumbrian wilderness, at the risk of some smart conflicts with the outlaws of that dark and desolate region, who fancied that they were trespassing on their own savage haunts, with no good or amicable intent; but of Eadwulf they found no traces.

Kenric persisted, alone, after all the rest had resigned the enterprise; and, relying on his Saxon origin and late servile condition, mingled with the outlaws, told his tale, showed the proclamation, and succeeded in interesting his auditors in his

own behalf and that of his brother; but he, no more than the others, could find any traces of the fugitive, and he began almost to consider it certain that the unhappy Eadwulf had perished among the hills, of the inclemency of the weather. He too, at last, returned home, despairing of ever seeing the unhappy outlaw more.

In the mean time, an earnest and interesting contest was going on in the castle, between Guendolen and Aradas on the one hand, and Sir Yvo de Taillebois on the other. For it had been discovered by the heralds, that there did exist proofs of blood-connection between the two families, sufficient to justify Sir Yvo in putting in a charge of his kinsman's murder against Sir Foulke d'Oilly, on the grounds of common rumor and hearsay, if Eadwulf should not be found; and, if he should, then on his testimony.

That D'Oilly would forthwith claim trial by wager of battle, none might doubt, who knew the character and antecedents of that desperately bad but dauntless man.

Now, it was the suit of Guendolen and Aradas, that Sir Yvo should appoint his young esquire his champion to do battle for the judgment of God—for they were irrevocably convinced—what, between their real faith in the justice of this cause, and the zealous trust, of those who love, in the superiority of the beloved, and the generous confidence of youth in its own glowing and impulsive valor—that Aradas would surely beat the traitor down, and win the spurs of gold, to which he so passionately aspired. But the clear-headed veteran regarded matters with a cooler and perhaps a wiser eye. He knew Sir Foulke d'Oilly for a trained, experienced, and all-practiced soldier; not only brave at all times, and

brave among the bravest—but a champion, such as there were few, and to be beaten only by a champion. He knew him also desperate, and fighting his last stake. He foresaw that, even for himself, the felon knight, unless the sense of guilt should paralyze his heart, or the visible judgment of God be interposed in the heat of battle—a thing in those days scarcely to be looked for—would prove no easy bargain in the lists; and, how highly soever he might estimate his young esquire's courage and prowess, he yet positively refused to allow him to assume the place of appellant in the lists; and denied utterly that such a conflict, being the most solemn and awful of appeals to the Almighty on his judgment-seat, was any proper occasion for the striving after spurs of gold, or aiming at the honors of knighthood.

So the lovers were obliged to decline into hopes of some indefinite future chance; and did decline into despondent and listless apathy, until, two days only before that appointed for the departure of the company into Lancashire, fortune or fate, which you will, thought fit to take the whole matter into its own hands, and to decide the much-vexed question of the championship by the misstep of a stumbling palfrey.

After having ridden all day long on a stout, sure-footed cob, which he had backed for ten years, without knowing him to make a solitary blunder, marking trees for felling, and laying out new plantations with his foresters, Sir Yvo was wending his way toward the castle gates, across the great home-park, when, a small blind ditch crossing his path, he put the pony at it in a canter.

Startled by some deer, which rose up suddenly out of the long fern, growing thick among the oak-trees, the pony

shyed, set his forefeet in the middle of the drain, and came down on his head, throwing his heavy rider heavily on the hard frozen ground.

A dislocated shoulder was the consequence; and, though it was speedily reduced, and no ill consequences followed, the surgeons declared that it was impossible that the knight should support his armor, or wield a sword, within two months; and thus, perforce, Guendolen had her way; and it was decided that Aradas should be admitted to the perilous distinction of maintaining the charge, in the wager of battle.

Strange times! when to be permitted to engage in a conflict, in which there was no alternative but victory, or infamy and death, was esteemed a favor, and was sought for, as a boon, not by strong men and soldiers only, but by delicate and gentle girls, in behalf of their betrothed lovers, as a mode of winning *los* on earth, and glory everlasting in the heavens.

Yet so it was; and when it was told to Guendolen, that her lover was nominated to that dreadful enterprise, a blush, indeed, mantled to her cheek, and a thrill ran through all her quivering frame, and an unbidden tear trembled in her beautiful clear eye; but the blush, and the thrill, and the tear, were of pride and excitement, not of fear or compassion; and the lady never slept sounder or more sweetly than on that eventful night, when she learned that, beyond a peradventure, her true love would be sleeping, within ten little days, under a bloody and dishonorable sod, or living, the winner of those golden-spurs and of her own peerless beauties.

There was, however, a strange mixture of simple and fervent faith in those days, with an infinitely larger amount of coarse and open wickedness, violence, and vice, than, perhaps,

ever prevailed in any other age. And while the moral restraint on men's conduct and actions, arising from a sense of future responsibility and retribution, was vastly inferior to what now exists, owing to the open sale of indulgences, absolutions, and dispensations, and the other abominable corruptions of the Romish church, the belief in temporal judgments, and the present interference of divine justice in the affairs of men, was almost universal.

Infidelity in those days was a madness utterly unknown; and an atheist, materialist, or any phase of what we now call a free-thinker, would have been regarded with greater wonder than the strangest physical monster. It is not too much to say, that there were not in that day twenty men in England, who did not believe in the real efficacy of the ordeals, whether by water, fire, or battle, in discovering the truth, or one in a thousand who would not be half-defeated, before entering the lists, by the belief that God was fighting against him, or strengthened unto victory by the confidence that his cause was just.

One of these one men in a thousand it was, however, about to be the fortune of Aradas de Ratcliffe to encounter, in the person of Sir Foulke d'Oilly; but this he neither knew, nor would have thought of twice, had he known it. However hardened the heart of his adversary might be by the petrifying effects of habitual vice, however dulled his conscience by impunity and arrogance and self-relying contumacy, his own was so strongly panoplied in conscious honesty, so bucklered by confidence in his own good cause, so puissant by faith in God, that he no more feared what the might of that bad man could do against him, than he doubted the creed of Christ and his holy apostles.

Nor less was the undoubting assurance of the lady of his love, in whom, to her faith in divine justice, to her absolute conviction of D'Oilly's damning guilt, was added that overweening confidence in her lover's absolute superiority, not only to all other men in general, but to every other man individually, which was common to love-sick ladies in those days of romance and chivalry.

But we must not anticipate, nor indeed is there cause to do so; for the days flew; until, after leaving Kendal Castle, the old fortalice of Yvo de Taillebois, who, coming in with the Conqueror, had wedded the sister of the Earls Morcar and Edwin, whence they took their departure as so much nearer to their destination, and journeying four pleasant winter days round the head of Morecambe Bay, they entered the old town of Lancaster. Sir Yvo de Taillebois was borne in a horse-litter, in consequence of his accident, at the head of a dozen knights, his vassals, all armed cap-à-pie; and a hundred spears of men-at-arms followed, with thrice as many of the already famous Kendal archers, escorting a long train of litters, conveying the lady and her female attendants, and a yet longer array of sumpter-mules and pack-horses.

The town was already crowded; but for a party so distinguished as that of Sir Yvo de Taillebois, High-Sheriff of the North-western counties, and chief local officer of the crown, apartments were prepared in the castle, adjoining those of the high justiciary and the itinerant, or, as we should now call them, circuit judges; while his train easily found quarters, some among the garrison of which they formed a part, as of right, and the rest in the vicinity of the castle.

At an early hour in the morning, preceded by trumpets and

javelin men, clad in all the magnificence of scarlet and ermine, emblematic of judicial purity, but unencumbered by the hideous perukes of horse-hair which later ages have devised for the disfigurement of forensic dignitaries, the high justiciary, Ranulf de Glanville, followed by his five associate judges, proceeded to the superb oak-wainscoted and oak-groined hall, in which it was used to hold the sittings of "the King's court," at that time the highest tribunal in the realm.

This noble apartment, which was above a hundred feet in length by half that width, and measured sixty feet from the floor to the spring of the open arches, independent of the octagon lantern in the center, beneath which burned nearly a ton of charcoal, in a superb brazier of carved bronze, was crowded from the floor to the light, flying galleries, with all the flower of the Northern counties, ladies as well as knights and nobles, attracted by one of those untraceable but ubiquitous rumors, which so often precede remarkable events, to the effect that something of more than ordinary moment was likely to occur at the present assize. Among this noble assemblage, all of whom rose to their feet, with a heavy rustle of furred and embroidered robes, and a suppressed murmur of applause, as the judges entered, conspicuous on the right-hand side of the nave was Sir Foulke d'Oilly, attended by two or three barons and bannerets of his immediate train, and not less than twenty knights, who held fiefs under him.

What, however, was the astonishment of the assembly, when, after the guard of pensioners, in royal livery, armed with halberts, which followed the judges, Clarencieux, king-at-arms, in his magnificent costume, supported by six pur-

suivants, in their tabards, with trumpets, made his appearance in the nave, and then two personages, no less than Humphry de Bohun, Lord High Constable, and William de Warrenne, Earl Mareschal of England, indicating by their presence that the court, about to be held, would be one of chivalry as well as of justice. Sir Yvo de Taillebois, and other officers of the crown, followed in the order; the justiciary and other high dignitaries took their seats, the trumpets sounded thrice, and, with the usual formalities, "the King's court" was declared open.

It was remarked afterward, though at the time no one noticed it, none suspecting the cause, that when the heralds and pomp, indicating the presence of a Court of Chivalry made their appearance, the face of Sir Foulke d'Oilly flushed fiery-red for a moment, and then turned white as ashes, even to the lips; and that he trembled so violently, that he was compelled to sit down, while all the rest were standing.

During the first three days of the assize, though many causes were tried of great local and individual interest, nothing occurred to satisfy the secret and eager anticipations of the excited audience, nothing to account for the unusual combination of civil and military powers on the judicial bench; and though all manner of strange rumors were afloat, there were none certainly that came very near the truth.

On the fourth morning, however, the crier, at command of the court, called Sir Foulke d'Oilly; who, presently appearing, stated that he was there, in pursuance of the king's order, to prosecute his claim to the possession of one Eadwulf the Red, alias Kenric, a fugitive villeyn, who had fled from his manor of Waltheofstow, within the precincts of Sherwood Forest,

against his, Sir Foulke d'Oilly's, will; and who was now in the custody of the sheriff of the county. He concluded by appointing Geoffrey Fitz Peter and William of Tichborne, two sergeants, learned in the law, as his counsel.

The sheriff of the county was then called into court, to produce the body of the person at issue, and Kenric was placed at the bar, his bondsmen surrendering him to take his trial.

Sir Yvo de Taillebois then stated the preliminary proceedings, the arrest of Kenric by seizure, his purchasing a writ *de libertate probando;* and that, whereas he, the Sheriff, might not try that question in his court, it was now brought up before the Eyre of justices for trial.

Kenric was then called upon to plead, which he did, by claiming to be a free man, and desiring liberty to prove the same before God and a jury of his countrymen.

The sheriff was thereupon commanded to impannel a jury; and this was speedily accomplished, twelve men being selected and sworn, six of whom were belted knights, two esquires of Norman birth, and four Saxon franklins, as they were now termed, who would have been thanes under their ancient dynasty, all free and lawful men, and sufficient to form a jury.

Then, the defendant in the suit being a poor man, and of no substance, counsel, skilled in the law, were assigned him by the court, Thomas de Curthose, and Matthew Gourlay, that he might have fair show of justice; and so the trial was ordered to proceed.

Then Geoffrey Fitz Peter rose and opened the case by stating that they should prove the person at the bar to be a serf, known as "Eadwulf the Red," who has escaped from the

manor of his lord at Waltheofstow, in Sherwood Forest, against his lord's will, on the 13th day of July last passed—that he had killed a deer, with a cross-bolt, on that same day, in the forest between Thurgoland and Bolterstone—and afterward murdered the bailiff of the manor of Waltheofstow, as aforesaid, with a similar weapon, at or near the same place, which weapons would be produced in court, and identified by comparison with corresponding weapons, and the arbalast to which they belong, found in the possession of the prisoner, when taken at Kentmere in Westmoreland—that he had been hunted hot-foot, with bloodhounds, through the forest, and across the moors to the Lancaster sands, when he had escaped only by the aid of the fatal and furious tide which had overwhelmed the pursuing horsemen—that he had been seen to land on the shore of Westmoreland, by a party of the pursuers, who had escaped the flood-tide by skirting the coast-line, and had been traced, foot by foot, by report of the natives of the country, who had heard of the arrival of a fugitive serf in the neighborhood, until he was captured in a cottage beside Kentmere, on the 10th day of October of this present year. And to prove this, he called Sir Foulke d'Oilly.

He, being sworn, testified that he knew, and had often seen, his serf "Eadwulf the Red," on the manor of Waltheofstow, and fully believed the person at the bar to be the man in question. He had joined the pursuers of the fugitive on the day after the catastrophe of the sands, had been engaged in tracing him to the cottage on Kentmere, and fully believed the person captured to be the same who was traced upward from the sands. Positively identified and swore to the person at the bar, as the man captured on the 10th day of October,

and to the crossbow and bolts produced in court, and branded with the name "Kenric," as taken in his possession.

Being cross-examined—he could not swear positively to any personal recollection of the features of "Eadwulf the Red," or that the person at the bar *was* the man, or *resembled* the man, in question. Believed him to be the man Eadwulf, because it was the general impression of his people that he was so.

Thomas de Curthose said—"This, my lords, is mere hearsay, and stands for naught." And Sir Ranulf de Glanville bowed his head, and replied—"Merely for naught."

Then Sir Foulke d'Oilly, being asked how, when he assumed this person's name to be Eadwulf, he ascribed to him the ownership of weapons stamped "Kenric," he replied, that "Kenric" was a name prepared aforehand, to avert suspicion, and assumed by Eadwulf, so to avoid suspicion.

Being asked where he showed that Eadwulf had assumed such other name, or that the name "Kenric" had ever been assumed by one truly named "Eadwulf," he replied, that "It was probable."

Thomas de Curthose said—"That is mere conjecture."

And, again, the justiciary assented.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ACQUITTAL.

> No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,
> Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword,
> The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
> Become them with one half so good a grace
> As "justice" does.
>
> MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

THEN was called Ralph Brito.

He, being sworn, deposed thus—Is a man-at-arms of Sir Foulke d'Oilly; has served him these twenty years and over, in France, in Wales, and in Ireland. Has dwelt the last ten years, until this year now current, at Sir Foulke's castle of Fenton in the Forest; since the decease of Sir Philip de Morville, has been one of the garrison of Waltheofstow. Knows Eadwulf the Red perfectly well—as well as his own brother. Has known him these ten years back, when he was gross thrall to Sir Philip de Morville. Has seen him since the death of Sir Philip. Has seen him daily, since he made one of the garrison of Waltheofstow, until the twelfth day of September last, when he saw him for the last time, until he was taken in the cottage on Kentmere. The person at the bar is the man. The person at the bar is Eadwulf the Red, and is also the man who was taken at the cottage.

They are the same. Did not follow the prisoner with the bloodhounds; came up, with my lord, the day after the accident on the sands. Was engaged in the pursuit till he was taken; was present at the arrest. The weapons in court were taken in the prisoner's house; took them down himself, from above the mantle-piece. The prisoner admitted them to be his weapons.

Matthew Gourlay, cross-examining, asked him—"You swear, certainly, that the man at the bar is *he*, known, in the time of Sir Philip de Morville, as Eadwulf the Red?

"I do."

"Of your own knowledge?"

"Of my own knowledge."

"Why was he called the Red?"

"Because he *was* red."

"What part of him?"

"His hair and beard."

"Of what color are your own hair and beard?"

"Red."

It so happened that the close-curled hair and the beard, knotted like the wool of a poodle dog, of this man, were of the brightest and most fiery hue of which the human hair is susceptible; while that of Kenric was of a deep, glossy auburn, falling in loose waves from a broad fair forehead.

"And what color is the person's at the bar?"

"Why, reddish, I suppose," said Ralph Brito, sullenly.

"About the same color with your own, ha? Well, you may go down," he said, satisfied that he had somewhat damaged the evidence, even of this positive perjurer.

Andrew of Spyinghow was then called, and, being sworn,

testified, that "he is the brother of Ralph Wetheral, the bailiff of Waltheofstow, who was found dead in the forest of Sherwood, on the 13th day of September last passed; and of Hugonet the Black, seneschal of Waltheofstow, as aforesaid, who was lost in the sands of Lancaster, on the 17th day of the said month. He and his brothers were known as the three spears of Spyinghow. He knew the serf, spoken of as Eadwulf the Red, as well as he knew his own face in the mirror. Had known him any time the last ten years, as serf, both to Sir Philp de Morville, and to his own lord, Sir Foulke d'Oilly. Had seen him last on the night of September the 12th, in the castle court at Waltheofstow; but had tracked him thence with bloodhounds to the verge of Borland Forest; had followed him by hue and cry across the moors to the sands of Morecambe Bay; had seen the fugitive crossing the bay; had seen him land on the Westmoreland shore, nor ever had lost the track of him, until he saw him taken in the cottage at Kentmere. The prisoner at the bar is the man." The witness then proceeded at length to describe the discovery of the slain stag, and the murdered bailiff, the manner of their deaths, the weapons found in the mortal wounds both of the beast and the man, and of the taking up of the scent of the fugitive from the spot where the double killing had taken place, by the bloodhounds.

Here Thomas de Curthose said—"This is a case we are trying, in this court of common pleas, of neifty, *de nativo habendo;* not a case of deer-slaying, in a forest court, or of murder, in a criminal court. Therefore, this evidence, as irrelevant, and tending to prejudice the jury against the prisoner, should be ruled out."

Geoffrey Fitz Peter said; "This testimony goeth only to prove the weapons, which were carried and used by the fugitive, be he who he may, at that place and that time stated, to be the same with those found in possession of the person at the bar, and owned by him to be his property And this testimony we propose to use, in order to show that the person at the bar was actually at the place at the time stated as aforesaid, and is the very fugitive in question; not that he is the killer of the deer, or the murderer of the man, which it is not in the province of this court, or in our purpose to examine."

Sir Ranulf de Glanville said—"To prove the identity of the person at the bar with the alleged fugitive, this evidence standeth good, but not otherwise."

His examination being resumed, the witness described, vividly and accurately, the pursuit of the fugitive with blood-hounds; his superhuman efforts to escape, both by speed of foot and by power of swimming; his wonderful endurance, and, at last, his vanishing, as it were, without leaving a single trace, either for sight or scent, in the midst of a bare moor. Great sympathy and excitement were manifested throughout the whole court, at this graphic narrative; and all eyes were turned, especially those of the fair sex, to the fine athletic person and noble features of Kenric, as he stood at the bar, alone of all that company, impassive and unmoved, with looks of pity and admiration.

But Kenric only shook his head, with a grave smile and a quiet wafture of the hand, as if putting aside the undeserved sympathy.

But when the witness proceeded to describe the rediscovery

of the fugitive crossing the sands, on the second morning after his temporary evasion, the desperate race against the speed of mortal horses, against the untamed velocity of the foam-crested coursers of the roaring ocean tide; when he depicted the storm bursting in the darkness, as of night, over the mailed riders and barbed horses struggling in the pools and quagmires; the fierce billows trampling over them, amid the tempest and the gloom; and the sun shining out on the face of the waters, and lo! there were none there, save Hugonet the Black, sitting motionless on his armed horse like a statue, until it should please the mounting tide to overwhelm him, from which he could by no earthly means escape, and the fugitive slave floating, in his chance-found coracle, within two oars' length of that devoted man, the excitement in the vast assembly knew no bounds. There were wild cries and sobs, and the multitude rocked and heaved to and fro, and several women swooned, and were carried out of the court-house insensible, and seemingly lifeless. It was many minutes before order could be restored.

Then the bolts or quarrels, which had been extracted from the slaughtered deer and the murdered man were produced in court, yet stained with the blood, and bearing the name of Kenric branded upon the wooden shafts with an iron stamp. The crossbow and bolts, found in Kenric's cottage, and admitted by him to be his property, were also produced, and the quarrels found in the forest tallied from point to point, even to a broken letter in the branding, with those which he acknowledged to be his; and an expert armorer being summoned, testified that those quarrels were proper ones for that

very arbalast, and would not fit one other out of twenty, it being of unusual construction.

At this point, not a person in the court, from the lowest spectator to the high justiciary on the bench, but believed the case to be entirely made out; and some of the crown lawyers whispered among themselves, wondering why the prisoner had not been arraigned in the forest or criminal courts, for the higher offenses, which seemed to be proved against him.

Thomas de Curthose, cross-examining the witness, asked—

"The man at the bar is Eadwulf the Red?"

"He is."

"On your oath, and of your own knowledge?"

"On my oath, and of my own knowledge."

"Did you ever hear that 'Eadwulf the Red' should call himself, or be called by others, 'Kenric.'"

"Never, until now."

"And how have you heard it now?"

"I have seen it stamped on his quarrels."

"Had 'Eadwulf the Red' a brother?"

"A brother?"

"Had 'Eadwulf the Red' a brother?"

"I have heard say he had."

"Of your own knowledge, on your oath?"

"He had a brother."

"What was his name?"

"I—I have forgotten."

"On your oath! on your oath, sirrah!" thundered Thomas de Curthose. "Was not his name 'Kenric?'"

"I think it was 'Kenric.'"

"Look at the person at the bar." The man did so; but reluctantly, and with an evident tremor.

"Is not that man 'Kenric,' the brother of 'Eadwulf the Red?'"

"That man is 'Eadwulf the Red'—I have sworn it."

"And art forsworn, in swearing it. But again, thou hast sworn, 'that on the third morning, after taking scent of the fugitive from the place of the deer and manslaying, and after hunting him constantly with bloodhounds, you lost all track of him on the bare moor in Borland Forest?'"

"Why, ay! I have sworn that; it is quite true," said the man, seemingly reassured, at the change of the line of examination.

"I doubt it not. Now, when did the hounds take the scent again?"

"Why, not at all. We saw he was making for the sands, and so squandered ourselves in parties, and on the second morning, at daybreak, saw him crossing them."

"How far off was he, when you saw him?"

"About three miles."

"Could you see, to know him, at that distance?"

"Why, no; but we guessed it was he, when we saw him run from us; and, when we wound up the clew to the end, and caught him, we found that we were right."

"You may stand down. Who is next?"

Four other witnesses followed, who all swore positively to the person of the prisoner, as "Eadwulf the Red," and testified to various points in the circumstances of the pursuit and capture, all tending to the identification of Kenric with the fugitive; and though the counsel for the defense had suc-

ceeded, more or less, in shaking the credit of some of the witnesses with the jury, and of raising a doubt concerning the existence of a brother, with whom the fugitive might have been confounded, no head had yet been made against the direct testimony of six witnesses, swearing positively to his person, and against the damaging circumstantial evidence of the crossbow and quarrels.

When the counsel for the plaintiff rested, and the court adjourned at ten o'clock, for dinner, not a lawyer in the court, except those retained in the defense, but looked on the case of Kenric as hopeless; and the party of Sir Foulke d'Oilly were consequently in high glee. But when the court reassembled, at noon, Walter Gourlay arose, and addressed the six judges—

"May it please your lordships, we shall right shortly prove to your satisfaction and to that of this honorable jury that this case lies in a nutshell, or rather is no case at all, or shadow of a case. First, we shall show to you that this person at the bar is not, nor ever was called, 'Eadwulf the Red,' though there may be some slight similarity of person between him and his brother, of that name; but that he is, and has been called from his cradle to this day, 'Kenric the Dark.' Secondly, we shall show you that this 'Kenric the Dark' was not in Sherwood Forest, or within fifty miles of it, on the 13th day of September last passed, or on any day within two months thereof. Thirdly, we shall show you that this 'Kenric the Dark' is not serf or villeyn to Sir Foulke d'Oilly, or to any Sir in England; but a free man, and free tenant of the Lord of Kendal, in the county of Westmoreland."

Then William of Tichborne, said—"Nay! Brother Gour-

lay, do not prove too much against us," and he laughed sneeringly; "else thou wilt convict our witnesses as mansworn."

And Thomas de Curthose laughed, and said—"Marry will we, and pillory them for it, likewise."

Then the defense called Bertha, the wife of Werewulf; and an exceedingly old woman was supported into court, by a younger woman of exceeding beauty; and, in consideration of her age and infirmities, she was accommodated with a seat. She was very feeble, and much emaciated, and her hair was as white as snow; but her figure, though frail and quivering, was erect as a weather-beaten pine, and her eye as clear as an eagle's.

"Well, mother, and who art thou?" asked the justiciary, in a kindly tone, "and what hast thou to tell us in this matter?"

"I am Bertha," she replied, in tones singularly clear and distinct, "the wife of Werewulf, the son of Beowulf, who was henchman to Waltheof, who was the Lord of Waltheofstow, before the Normans came to England."

"A serf to testify in proof of a serf's liberty!" said William of Tichborne. "Such evidence may not stand."

"She is no serf, my lord," said Gourlay, "but as free as my brother of Tichborne. Let the Sheriff of Lancaster be sworn."

So, Sir Yvo de Taillebois being sworn in his place, testified: "Bertha, the wife of Werewulf, is a free woman. I bought her myself, with her own free consent, of my friend Sir Philip de Morville, and manumitted her, for reasons of mine own."

"Let Bertha proceed."

"I am the mother of seven sons, in lawful wedlock born;

five of whom, and three grandsons, sleep with their fathers, in the kirkyard of Waltheofstow; two, as I believe, yet draw the breath of life, biding God's good time; 'Kenric the Dark,' my second born, and 'Eadwulf the Red,' my youngest. Kenric stands yonder, at the bar; Eadwulf is a wanderer on the moorland."

Being cross-examined; "Would she know her sons any where; would she know them apart?"

"Know my own sons!" she made answer; "the flesh of my own flesh, the bone of my own bone! By day or by night, in darkness or in light, by the lowest sound of the voice, by the least pressure of the hand, by the feeling of their hair, or the smell of their breath, would I know them, and know them apart, any where. Yon is Kenric, and Kenric is no more like to Eadwulf, than day is to darkness, or a bright summer sunshine to a thunder-cloud in autumn."

"Call Aradas de Ratcliffe."

He, being sworn, was asked;

"Know you the person at the bar; and, if ay, what is his name?"

"I know him well; his name is Kenric; his condition, so far as I know, a freeman, and verdurer to Sir Yvo de Taillebois."

"When did you see him first, to know him?"

"In July last, when my Lord of Taillebois returned from Yorkshire, and brought him along in his train."

"Have you seen him in the mean time; and, if ay, how often?"

"Almost daily. He is one of our best foresters, and we rarely hunt or hawk without him."

"Can you name any one day, in particular, when you saw the person at the bar, between July and October, to know him?"

"I can. On the 12th day of last September, at eight o'clock in the evening, we being then at supper, Kenric came into the hall, by permission, to bring tidings that he had tracked the great mouse-colored hart-royal, which has been known in the dales this hundred years, into a deep dingle at the head of Yewdale, and that he was laid up for the night. On the 13th, we were astir before day, and Kenric led us to the lair; and we hunted that hart all day long on the 13th, and killed him at sunset on the skirts of Skiddaw. We had to pass the night on the mountain, and I well remember how Kenric was the best man in collecting firing and making all things comfortable for the night, it being cold, and a keen white-frost."

Being cross-examined—"I know it was on the 12th that he brought the tidings, because my rents fall due on that day at Rydal Manor, and I had ridden over to collect them, and returned home somewhat late for supper, and had just sat down to table, very hungry, when he came in with the news of the great hart-royal; and that spoiled my supper, for the thought of killing that hart on the morrow took away all my appetite."

"And did you kill him, sir?" asked Sir Ranulf de Glanville from the bench, eagerly; for if he were famous as a lawyer, he was little less so as a woodman.

"With a clothyard-shaft from my own bow, Sir Ranulf, at twenty score yards and thirteen."

"Well, sir, it was a very pretty shot," returned the high

justiciary, nothing abashed by the smile which ran through the court; "and you have given very pretty evidence. Have you any more witnesses, Master Gourlay? Methinks the jury have had almost enough of this."

"We will detain your lordships but a very little longer William Fitz Adhelm."

And he knew Kenric well, and remembered his services particularly on that 13th day of September; and, to prove the date, he produced a record of the chase, carved on ivory, which was hung from the antlers of that celebrated deer, in the great hall at Hawkshead Castle, recording the length of the hunt, the dogs and horses engaged, and all the circumstances of the great event.

The bailiff of Kendal was then called, who swore that he knew Kenric, as forester and verdurer, since July last, and that he had seen him since that date almost daily; for that three days had never passed without his bringing him game for his guest-table, according to the orders of his lord.

"And here," said Thomas de Curthose, "we might safely rest, stating merely, in explanation, that the true 'Eadwulf the Red,' brother of the person at the bar, did, we believe, all the things stated by the witnesses to this court, and did leave, at the cottage on Kentmere, the crossbow produced before the court, which he had previously purloined from his brother, while at Waltheofstow. But desiring to place this man's freedom on record beyond a question or a peradventure, we will call Sir Yvo de Taillebois."

He, of course, testified to all that is known to the readers of this history, and which was not known to the jury or the court; to his own agency, namely, in the purchase and manu-

mission of the serf Kenric, and to his establishment of him as a free tenant on his lands of Kentmere, in Kendal.

"And here we rest," said Thomas of Curthose, "nor shall trouble the court so much as to sum up what is so palpable."

The complainants declining to say any thing farther, Ranulf de Glanville said—

"It is scarce necessary that I should say any thing to this jury, seeing that if the evidence of Sir Yvo de Taillebois be received as credible, the case is at an end. But I would say that, without his testimony, the defense might have rested safely, when they had shown that the alleged fugitive, 'Kenric,' was a resident here in Westmoreland, on the day, and long before the day, when he is charged on oath to have been a serf in Yorkshire. For if A claim a horse, now in the possession of B, swearing, and bring in witnesses to swear, that he, A, lost, or had stolen from him, the said horse, on such a day; and B bring sufficient and true witnesses to satisfy the jury that the said horse, so claimed was in his, B's, possession, days, weeks, or months before the 'such a day' on which A avers to have lost or had the said horse stolen from him—then it is to be presumed, not that A and his witnesses are mistaken as to the day, on which the horse was lost, seeing that he and they have sworn positively to the day, and that it is in him and them, alone, and on no others, truly to know the day on which the said horse was lost or stolen—but that the horse is another horse altogether, and not that horse lost or stolen on the day averred; inasmuch as this horse claimed was, on that day, and theretofore and thereafter, standing here, and could not therefore be lost or stolen elsewhere. This is the law, gentlemen, of an ox, or an ass, or a goat, or

a piece of furniture, or of any thing that is property, dead or living. Much more so, therefore, of the liberty of a man. For God forbid that on this earth of England the liberty of a man, which is even the dearest thing he hath on earth, should be more lightly jeoparded, or less securely guaranteed to him, than the value of his ox, or his ass, or his goat, or his chattel, whatsoever it may be, that is claimed of him. And now, gentlemen of the jury, I will detain you no longer. You may retire, if you wish to deliberate on your verdict, whether the person at the bar be 'Eadwulf the Red,' gros thrall of Sir Foulke d'Oilly, or 'Kenric the Dark,' and a true freeman."

"So please the court, we are agreed," was the unanimous answer of the jurymen.

"And how will you render your verdict?"

"By our foreman, Sir Ralph Egerton, of Egerton."

"We find," said the foreman, in answer to the eye of the justiciary, "that the person at the bar, 'Kenric, surnamed the Dark,' is a free man, and that Sir Foulke d'Oilly hath no claim against his liberty or person. And we farther recommend that the witnesses for the plaintiff, more especially Ralph Brito, and Andrew of Spyinghow, be taken into custody, and held to answer to a charge of perjury."

"You have said well, gentlemen, and I thank you for your verdict," said the justiciary. "Clerk of the court, record the verdict; and see that warrants issue against Ralph de Brito and Hugh of Spyinghow. Kenric, thou art free; free of all charge against thee; free to walk boldly and uprightly before God; and, so far as you do no wrong, to turn aside for fear of no man. Go, and thank God, therefore, that you are born

on English soil, where every man is held free, till he is proved a slave; and where no man can be delivered into bondage, save on the verdict of a jury of his countrymen. This is the law of England. God save the King. Amen!"

Then, turning to Sir Yvo de Taillebois, "You brought that fellow off with flying colors! Now, you will sup with me, at my lodgings, at nine. My brothers of the bench will be with us, and my lord high constable, and the earl mareschal; and we will have a merry time of it. They have choice oysters here, and some lampreys; and that boar's head, and the venison, you sent us, are superb. You will come, of course."

"With pleasure," said De Taillebois, "but"—and he whispered something in his ear.

"Ha! do you fear so? I think not; but we will provide for all chances; and, in good time, here comes Clarencieux. Ho! Clarencieux, sup with us, at nine to-night; and, look you, we shall want Sir Foulke d'Oilly in court to-morrow. I do not think that he will give us the slip; but, lest he try it, let two of your pursuivants and a dozen halberdiers keep their eye on him till the court sits in the morning; and if he offer to escape, arrest him without scruple, and have him to the constable's lodging. Meantime, forget not nine of the clock, in my lodgings."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FALSE CHARGE AND THE TRUE.

> As for the rest appealed,
> It issues from the rancor of a villain,
> A recreant and most degenerate traitor;
> Which, in myself, I boldly will defend;
> And interchangeably hurl down my gage
> Upon this overweening traitor's foot,
> To prove myself a loyal gentleman,
> Even in the best blood chambered in his bosom.
>
> KING RICHARD II.

So soon as the court was opened on the following morning, to the astonishment of all parties, and to that of no one, as it would seem, more than of the grand justiciary himself, Kenric was again introduced; but this time heavily ironed, and in the charge of two ordinary constables of the hundred.

"Ha! what is this?" asked Ranulf de Glanville, sharply. "For what is this man brought here again in this guise? Judgment was rendered in his case, last night; and I would have all men to know, that from this court there is no appeal. Or is there some new charge against him?"

"In some sort, a new charge, my lord," replied the clerk of the court; he was arrested last night, the moment he had left this court, on the complaint of Ralph Brito, next of kin to the deceased, for the murder of Ralph Wetheral, the sen-

eschal of Waltheofstow, at the time and in the place, which your lordship wots of, having heard all about it, in the case decided yesterday *de nativo habendo!*"

"Now, by my halidom!" said Glanville, the fire flashing to his dark eyes, "this is wonderful insolence and *outrecuidance* on the part of Master Ralph Brito, who is himself, or should be, under arrest for perjury—"

"So, please you, he hath entered bail for his appearance, and is discharged of custody."

"Who is his bondsman, and in what bail is he held?"

"So please you, in a hundred marks of silver. Sir Foulke d'Oilly is his bondsman."

"The bail is well enough; the bondsman is not sufficient. Let the proper officer attach the body of Ralph Brito. Upon my life! he has the impudence to brave us here, in court."

"Who? I not sufficient," cried Sir Foulke d'Oilly, fiercely, rising to his feet, as if to defy the court. "I not sufficient for a paltry bail of a hundred marks of silver? I would have you to know, Sir Ranulf—"

"And I would have you to know, sir," thundered the high justiciary, "that this is 'the King's court,' in the precincts of which you have dared to make your voice be heard; and that I, humble as I am, stand here in *loco regis*, and will be treated with the reverence due to my master. For the rest, I will speak with you anon, when I shall have dealt with this case now before me, which seems one of shameful persecution and oppression.

Sir Foulke d'Oilly had remained on his feet during the time the justiciary was speaking; and now, turning his eye to his

barons and the knights of his train, who took the cue, and rose silently, he began to move toward the door.

"Ha! is it so? Close up, halberdiers; guard the doors! Pursuivants, do your duty. Sheriff of Lancaster, have you a guard at hand to protect the court?"

"Surely, my lord," replied Sir Yvo de Taillebois. "Without, there! pass the word to the proper officer, that he turn out the guard."

In a moment, the call of the bugles of the archery was heard, and was shortly succeeded by the heavy, ordered march of infantry, closing up to the doors, while the cavalry-trumpets rang through the narrow streets of the old city, and the clash of mail-coats and the tramp of chargers told that the men-at-arms were falling in, in great numbers.

Meanwhile, two of the pursuivants, in waiting on Clarencieux, had made their way to Sir Foulke d'Oilly, and whispered something in his ear, which, whatever it was, made him turn as pale as death, and sink down into his seat, without saying a word, while the pursuivants remained standing at his back. The nobles and knights of his train looked at him, and looked at one another, with troubled glances; but, finding no solution to their doubts or answer to their question, seated themselves in sullen discontent.

The multitude which filled the court-house, meantime, was in the wildest state of confusion and consternation; the call for the military force had struck terror into all, especially the feebler part of the crowd, the aged persons and women, many of whom were present; for none knew, in those stormy times, how soon swords might be drawn in the court itself, or the

hall cleared by a volley of cloth-yard arrows from the sheriff's Kendal archers.

After a while, however, by the exertions of the proper officers, order was restored; and then, as if nothing had occurred to interrupt the thread of his thoughts, De Glanville continued in the matter of Kenric, who still waited in custody of the sheriff's officers.

"Be there any other charges against this man, Kenric, beside this one of murder?"

"One of deer-killing, my lord, against the statute, in the forest court, at the same time, and in the same place, as stated yesterday."

"And on the same evidence, doubtless, on which the jury pronounced yesterday. In fact, there can be no other. In the last charge, who is the prosecutor?"

"Sir Foulke d'Oilly, my lord."

"Ah! Sir Foulke d'Oilly! Sir Foulke d'Oilly!" cried Sir Ranulf, looking lightnings at him, and then turning to the clerk. "Well, sir. This matter is not as yet in the province of this court. Let it go to the grand jury now in session, and see that they have copies of the warrants, and full minutes of all the evidence rendered in the case *de nativo*, and of the jury's finding, that they may have the power to judge if these charges be not purely malicious."

A solemn pause followed, full of grave expectation, while the officers were removing Kenric from the hall, and while the high-justiciary, his assessors on the bench, the high-constable, the earl mareschal, and the sheriff of the county were engaged in close consultation.

At the end of this conference, the high-sheriff formally

appointed Sir Hugo le Norman to be his deputy, with full powers, by the consent of the court, invested him with his chain and staff of office, and, shortly afterward, appeared in his private capacity, in the body of the hall; and it was now observed, which had not been noticed while he wore his robes of his office, that he carried his right arm in a sling, and halted considerably in his gait, as if from a recent injury.

"Stand forward, now, Sir Foulke d'Oilly," exclaimed the justiciary. "Crier, call Sir Foulke d'Oilly into court."

Then, as the knight made his appearance at the bar, followed by the two pursuivants—

"Now, Sir Foulke d'Oilly," he proceeded, "what have you to say, why you stand not committed to answer for the murder of Sir Philip de Morville, and his esquire, Jehan de Morville, basely and treacherously by you and others unknown, on them, done and committed, in the forest of Sherwood, by the river of Idle, in the shire of Nottingham, on the sixth day of August last passed, as charged on good and sufficient evidence against you?"

"By whom is the charge put in?" iuquired the felon knight, who, now that he was certain of the worst, had mustered all his ruffian courage to his aid, and was ready to bear down all opposition by sheer brute force and determination.

"By Sir Yvo de Taillebois, Lord of High Yewdale, Hawkshead, Coniston, and Kendal, and High-Sheriff of this shire of Lancaster."

"The Knight of Taillebois," retorted the other, "can put in no such charge, seeing that he is not of the blood of the man alleged to be murdered."

"Ha! how say you to that, Sir Yvo de Taillebois?"

"I say, my lord," replied De Taillebois, "that in this, as in all else, Sir Foulke d'Oilly lies in his teeth and in his throat; and that I *am* of the blood of Sir Philip de Morville, by him most foully and most treacherously murdered. May it please you, my lord, call Clarencieux, king-at-arms."

"Ho! Clarencieux, what knowest thou of this kindred of these houses?"

"We find, my lord," replied Clarencieux, "that in the reign of Duke Robert, father of King William the Conqueror, Raoul, Count of Evreux, in the Calvados, gave his daughter Sybilla in wedlock to Amelot, Lord of Taillebois, in the Beauvoisis. The son of this Raoul of Evreux was Stephen, invested with the fief of Morville, in Morbihan, who fought at Hastings, and for good service rendered there and elsewhere, received the fief of Walthcofstow in Sherwood. The son of Amelot of Taillebois and Sybilla was Yvo de Taillebois, the elder, who fought likewise at Hastings, and for good service performed there and elsewhere was enfeoffed of the lordships of Coniston and Yewdale; as his son became seized, afterward, of those of Hawkshead and Kendal, in right of his mother, sister and sole heiress of the Earls Morear and Edwin, and wife of Yvo de Taillebois, first Norman Lord of Kendal. Therefore, this Stephen de Morville, first Norman lord of Waltheofstow, was maternal uncle to Yvo de Taillebois, first Norman lord of Coniston and Yewdale. Now, Philip de Morville, deceased, was fourth in descent, in the direct male line, from Stephen, who fought at Hastings; and Yvo de Taillebois, here present, is third in descent, in the direct male line, from the elder Yvo, the nephew of Stephen, who also fought at Hastings; as is set down in this parchment roll, which no man can

gainsay. Therefore, Sir Yvo de Taillebois *is* of the blood of Sir Philip de Morville, deceased; and is competent to put in a charge of the murder of his kinsman.

"On what evidence does he charge me?"

"On that of an eye-witness," exclaimed Sir Yvo de Taillebois. "Let them call Eadwulf the Red."

"A fugitive serf, deer-slayer, and murderer!" cried Sir Foulke d'Oilly.

"But under the king's safe conduct, here in court," said Sir Ranulf, "and under proclamation of liberty and free pardon of all offenses, if by his evidence conviction be procured of the doers of this most foul murder."

Then Eadwulf was produced in court, miserably emaciated and half-starved, but resolute of mien and demeanor, and obstinate as ever. He had been discovered, by mere chance, in a cavern among the hills, half-frozen, and more than half-starved, by the foresters of High Yewdale, who had been instructed to keep a lookout for him; and, having been with difficulty resuscitated, and made acquainted with the tenor of the king's proclamation, had been forwarded, in a litter, by relays of horses, in order to give evidence to the murder.

But, as it proved, his evidence was not needed; for, so soon as he saw him in court, Sir Foulke d'Oilly pleaded not guilty, flung down his glove, and declared himself ready to defend his innocence with his body.

"The matter is out of my jurisdiction," said Sir Ranulf de Glanville. "My Lord High Constable, and you, Earl Mareschal of England, it is before your Court of Chivalry."

"Sir Yvo de Taillebois is the appellant," said the high-

constable. "Do you take up the glove, and are you ready in like manner to defend your charge with your body?"

"I am ready, with my own body, or with that of my champion; for, unless the wager of battle be deferred these two months, I may not brook the weight of my armor, or wield a sword, as my leech has herein on oath testified;" and, with the words, he handed a scroll to the court.

"Thou hast the right to appear by thy champion. To defer the trial were unseemly," said the constable, after a moment's consultation with the mareschal. "Take up his glove, Sir Yvo de Taillebois."

De Taillebois took it up; and both parties being called upon to produce their pledges, Sir Yvo de Taillebois gave Lord Dacre and Sir Hugo le Norman, and Sir Foulke d'Oilly, Sir Reginald Maltravers and Sir Humphrey Bigod, who became their godfathers, as it is termed, for the battle. Whereupon, Sir Humphrey de Bohun, the high-constable, thus spoke, and the herald, following his words, made proclamation—

"Hear ye, Sir Yvo de Taillebois and Sir Foulke d'Oilly, appellant and appellee; ye shall present yourselves, you Sir Yvo de Taillebois, appellant, in your own person, or by your champion, to be by this court approved, and you, Sir Foulke d'Oilly, appellee, in your person, in the tilt-yard of this Castle of Lancaster, at ten o'clock of the morning of the third day hereafter, to do battle to the uttermost on this quarrel. And the terms of battle shall be these—on foot, shall ye fight; on a spot of dry and even ground, sixty paces in length, and forty in breadth, inclosed with barriers seven feet high, with no one within them, to aid or abet you, save God and your

own prowess. Your weapons shall be a long sword and a short sword, and a dagger; but your arms defensive may be at your own will; and ye shall fight until one of you be slain, or shall have yielded, or until the stars be seen in heaven. And the conditions of the battle are these; if the appellee slay the appellant, or force him to cry 'craven,' or make good his defense until the stars be seen in heaven, then shall he, the appellee, be acquitted of the murder. But if the appellant slay the appellee, or force him to cry 'craven,' or if the appellee refuse to continue the fight, then shall he, the appellee, be held convicted of the murder. And whosoever of the two shall be slain, or shall cry 'craven,' or shall refuse to continue the fight, shall be stripped of his armor, where he lies, and shall be dragged by horses out of the lists, by a passage made in one of the angles, and shall be hanged, in the presence of the mareschal; and his escutcheon shall be reversed, and his name shall be declared infamous forever. This is the sentence of this court, therefore—that on the third day hence, ye do meet in the tilt-yard of this Castle of Lancaster, at ten o'clock of the morning, and there do battle, in this quarrel, to the uttermost. And so may God defend the right!"

Before the court adjourned, a messenger came into the hall from the grand jury, and Kenric was re-conducted into the presence, still ironed, and in custody of the officers.

Sir Ranulf de Glanville opened the parchment scroll, and read aloud, as follows—

"In the case of Kenric surnamed the Dark, accused of deer-slaying, against the forest statute, and of murder, or

homicide, both alleged to have been done and committed in the forest of Sherwood, on the 13th day of September last passed, the grand inquest, now in session, do find that there is no bill, nor any cause of process.

"Done and delivered in Lancaster Castle, this 6th day of December, in the year of Grace 1184.

"WALLERAN DE VIPONT,
"*Foreman of y^e^ Grand Inquest.*"

"Why, of course not," said Ranulf de Glanville. Not a shadow of a cause. Strike off those irons. He stands discharged, in all innocence and honor. Go thy ways, sirrah, and keep clear of the law, I counsel you, in future; and, for this time, thank God and the laws of your country, that you are a freeman, in a whole skin, this evening."

"I do thank God, and *you*, Sir Ranulf, that you have given me a fair trial and free justice."

"God forbid, else, man! God forbid, else!" said the justiciary; "and now, this court stands adjourned until to-morrow, in the morning, at six of the clock. Heralds, make proclamation; God save the King!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

WAGER OF BATTLE.

"Then rode they together full right,
With sharpe speares and swordes bright;
They smote together sore.
They spent speares and brake shields;
They pounsed as fowl in the fields;
Either foamed as doth a boar."

SIR TRIAMOUR.

THE fatal third day had come about, and with it all the dreadful preparations for the judicial combat.

With what had passed in the long interval between, to those whose more than lives, whose very hearts and souls, whose ancient names and sacred honors, were staked on the event, it is not for us to know or inquire. Whether the young champion, for it was generally known that Sir Aradas de Ratcliffe, invested with the golden-spurs and consecrated with the order of knighthood, by the sword of the earl mareschal, in order to enable him to meet the appellee on equal terms, was appointed, with the full consent of the Court of Chivalry, champion for the appellant—whether, I say, the young champion ever doubted, and wished he had waited some fairer opportunity, when he might win the golden-spurs without the fearful risk of dying a shameful death, and tarnishing forever an un-

blemished name, I know not. If he did, it was a human hesitation, and one which had not dishonored the bravest man who ever died in battle.

Whether the young and gentle maiden, the lovely Guendolen, the most delicate and tender of women, who scarce might walk the earth, lest she should dash her foot against a stone; or breathe the free air of heaven, lest it should blow on her damask cheek too rudely—whether *she* never repented that she had told him, "for this I myself will gird the sword upon your thigh," when she thought of the bloody strife in which two must engage, but whence one only could come forth alive; when she thought of the mangled corpse; of the black gibbet; of the reversed escutcheon; of the dishonored name; whether she never wept, and trembled, and almost despaired, I know not. If she did not, she was more or less than woman. But her face was pale as ivory, and her eyes wore a faint rose-colored margin, as if she had either wept, or been sleepless, for above one night, when she appeared from her lodging on that awful morning; though her features were as firm and rigid as if they had been carved out of that Parian marble which their complexion most resembled, and her gait and bearing were as steady and as proud as if she were going to a coronation, rather than to the awful trial that should seal her every hope on earth, of happiness or misery.

They little know the spirit of the age of chivalry, who imagine that, because in the tilt, the tournament, the joust, the carrousel, all was pomp and splendor, music and minstrelsy, and military glory, largesse of heralds and love of ladies, *los* on earth and fame immortal after death, there was any such

illusion or enchantment in the dreadful spectacle of an appeal to the judgment of God by wager of battle.

In it there were no gayly decorated lists, flaunting with tapestries and glittering with emblazoned shields; no gorgeous galleries crowded with ladies, a galaxy of beauty in its proudest adornment; no banners, no heralds in their armorial tabards, no spirit-thrilling shouts, no soul-inspiring music, only a solitary trumpet for the signals; but, instead of this, a bare space strewed with sawdust, and surrounded with naked piles, rudely-fashioned with the saw and hatchet; an entrance at either end, guarded by men-at-arms, and at one angle, just without the barrier, a huge black-gibbet, a block, with the broad ax, the dissecting-knife, and all the hideous paraphernalia of the headsman's trade, and himself a dark and sordid figure, masked and clad in buff of bull's hide, speckled and splashed with the gory stains of many a previous slaughter, leaning against the gallows. The seats for the spectators—for, like all other tragedies of awful and engrossing interest, a judicial combat never lacked spectators—were strewed, in lieu of silken-hangings and sendal-cushions, with plain black serge; and the spectators themselves, in lieu of the gay, holiday vestments in which they were wont to attend the gay and gentle passages of arms, wore only their every-day attire, except where some friend or favorer of the appellant or appellee, affected to wear white, in token of trust in his innocence, with a belt or kerchief of the colors worn by the favored party.

Amid all this gloom and horror, the only relieving point was the superb surcoats and armor of the constable and mareschal, and the resplendent tabard of the king-at-arms,

who sat on their caparisoned horses without the lists, backed by a powerful body of men-at-arms and archers, as judges of the field, and doomsters of the vanquished in that strife which must end in death and infamy to one or the other of the combatants.

From an early hour, long before the first gray dawn of day, all the seats, save those preserved for certain distinguished personages, had been occupied by a well-dressed crowd; all the avenues to the place were filled, choked, to overflowing; the roofs, the balconies, the windows of every house that commanded a view of the lists, the steeples of the neighboring churches, the battlements and the bartizans of the gray old castle, already gray and old in the second century of Norman dominion, were crowded with eager and excited multitudes—so great was the interest created by the tidings of that awful combat, and the repute for prowess of the knights who were pitted in it to meet and part no more, until one should go down forever.

And now the shadow was cast upon the dial, close to the fated hour of ten, from the clear winter sun, to borrow the words of the greatest modern poet—

> "Which rose upon that heavy day,
> And mocked it with its steadiest ray."

The castle gates rolled open on their hinges, grating harsh thunder; and forth came a proud procession, the high-justiciary and his five associate judges, with their guard of halberdiers, and the various high officers of the court, among these the sheriff, whose anxious and interested looks, and, yet

more, whose pale and lovely daughter, hanging on his arm, so firm and yet so wan and woe-begone, excited general sympathy.

And when it was whispered through the multitude, as it was almost instantaneously—for such things travel as by instinct—that she was the betrothed of the young appellant, and that, to win her with his spurs of gold, he had assumed this terrible emprize, all other excitement was swallowed up in the interest created by the cold and almost stern expression of her lovely features, and her brave demeanor.

And more ladies than one whispered in the ears of those who were dearest to them; "If he be vanquished, she will not survive him!"

And many a manly voice, shaken in a little of its firmness, made reply;

"He may be slain, but he can not be vanquished."

Scarcely had the members of the Court been seated, with those of the higher gentry and nobility, who had waited to follow in their suit, when from the tower of a neighboring Cistercian house, the clock struck ten; and, now, as in that doleful death-scene in Parisina;

"The convent-bells are ringing,
But mournfully and slow:
In the gray square turret swinging,
With a deep sound, to and fro,
Heavily to the heart they go.
Hark! the hymn is singing—
The song for the dead below,
Or the living who shortly shall be so;
For a departing being's soul
The death-hymn peals, and the hollow bells knoll."

While those bells were yet tolling, and before the echoes of the last stroke of ten had died away, two barefooted friars entered the lists, one at either end, each carrying a Bible and a crucifix; and at the same moment the two champions were seen advancing, each to his own end of the lists, accompanied by his sureties or god-fathers, all armed in complete suits of chain-mail; Sir Aradas as appellant, entering at the east, Sir Foulke at the left, end of the inclosure.

Here they were met each by one of the friars, the constable and mareschal riding close up to the barriers, to hear the plighting of their oaths.

And at this moment, the eyes of all the multitude were riveted on the forms of the two adversaries, and every judgment was on the stretch to frame auguries of the issue, from the thews, the sinews, and the demeanor, of the two champions.

It was seen at a glance that Sir Foulke d'Oilly was by far the stronger-built and heavier man. He was exceedingly broad-shouldered, and the great volume of his humeral muscles gave him the appearance of being round-backed; but he was deep-chested, and long-armed; and, though his hips were thick and heavy, and his legs slightly bowed—perhaps in consequence of his almost living on horseback—it was evident that he was a man of gigantic strength, impaired neither by excess nor age, for he did not seem to be more than in his fortieth year.

Sir Aradas de Ratcliffe, on the contrary, was nearly three inches taller than his opponent, and proportionately longer in the reach; but altogether he was built more on the model of an Antinous than a Hercules. If he were not very broad in the

shoulders, he was singularly deep and round in the chest, and remarkable for the arched hollow of his back and the thinness of his flanks. His arms and legs were irreproachable, and, all in all, he trod the firm earth with

> "A station like the herald Mercury,
> New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill."

But it was from the features of the two men that most took their auspices, and that the friends of Aradas drew confident augury of his triumph.

The face of Sir Foulke d'Oilly was flaccid and colorless, with huge over-lapping brows shading his small keen eyes with a pent-house of grizzly bristles, large pendant cheeks, a sinister hooked nose, and a mouth indicative of lust, cruelty, and iron firmness—altogether, a sordid vulturine type of man.

The features of Aradas, on the contrary, were clean, clear, fleshless, and finely marked; a broad, smooth forehead, straight-cut black eyebrows, well-opened hazel eyes, with a tawny flash when excited, like to that of a lion or an eagle, a nose slightly aquiline, and a mouth not less benevolent than resolute. No one could look at him and his opponent, without thinking instinctively of the gallant heaven-aspiring falcon matched with the earthly, carrion vulture.

Nor was there less meaning or omen in the tone of their voices, as they swore.

Men paused to listen breathlessly; for among the lower classes on the field there were heavy bets pending on the issue, and the critical judges of those days believed that there was much in the voice of a man.

As each entered the lists, he was met by a friar, who

encountered him with the question, "Brother, hast thou confessed thy sins this morning?"

To this, D'Oilly muttered a reply, inaudible to the questioner; but Aradas made answer, in a voice that rang like a silver bell, "I have confessed my sins, father, and, thanks to the Lord Jesus, have received absolution and the most holy sacrament of his body."

The questions were then put to both, to be answered with the hand on the evangelists and the lip on the crucifix—

"Do you hereby swear that your former answers and allegations are all true; that you bear no weapons but those allotted by the court; that you have no charms about you; that you place your whole trust in God, in the goodness of your cause, and in your own prowess?"

To this solemn query, Sir Foulke replied only by the two words, "I swear!" and those so obscurely uttered, that the constable called on him to repeat them.

But Sir Aradas raised his head, and looked about him with a frank and princely air. "I hereby swear," he said, "that which I swore heretofore—that Sir Foulke d'Oilly is a murderer, a liar, and a traitor—to be true, and on his body I will prove it; that I have not, nor will use any weapons save what the court allot me; that I wear neither charm nor talisman; and that, save in my good cause, my own right hand, and my trust in God, I have not whereon to rest my hope, here, or hereafter. So may He help me, or desert me at my utmost need, on whose evangelists I am now sworn."

Then the godfathers led the men up face to face, and each grasping the other by the mailed right hand, they again swore—

The appellant, "My uttermost will I do, and more than my uttermost, if it may be, to slay thee on this ground whereon we stand, or to force thee to cry 'craven'—so help me God, 'in his most holy heaven!"

And the appellee, "My uttermost will I do, and more, if may be, than my uttermost, to prove my innocence upon thy body, on this ground whereon we stand—so help me God, in the highest!"

The same difference was observed in the voices of the two men, as they again swore; for while the tones of Aradas had the steel-tempered ring of the gallant game-cock's challenge, the notes of Sir Foulke were liker to the quavering croak of the obscene raven.

Then the godfathers retired them, till they stood face to face, with thirty feet between them, and delivered to them the arms allotted by the court. These were—a dagger, with a broad, flat blade, eighteen inches in length, worn in a scabbard on the right side, behind the hip; an estoc, or short sword, of about two feet six, with a sharp point, and grooved bayonet-blade, hanging perpendicularly on the left thigh; and a huge two-handed broadsword, four feet from guard to point, with a hilt of twenty inches, and a great leaden pommel to counterbalance the weight of the blade in striking.

Their defensive arms were nearly similar. Each wore a habergeon, or closely-fitting shirt of linked mail, with mail sleeves, mail hose, poldrons, genouillieres, and shoes of plated splints of steel; and flat-topped helmets, with avantailles and beavers. But the neck of Sir Foulke d'Oilly was defended by the new-fashioned gorget of steel plates, while Aradas adhered to the old mail-hood or tippet, hooked on to the lower rim of

his beaver. And it was observed that while D'Oilly wore his small heater-shaped shield on his left arm, De Ratcliffe threw his over his shoulder, suspended from the chain which held it about his neck, so as to leave both his arms free to wield his mighty war-sword.

Beyond this, it was only noted that in the casque of Sir Aradas was a lady's glove, and on his left arm an azure scarf, fringed with gold, such as the pale girl on the seneschal's arm wore, over her snow-white cymar, crossing her left shoulder and the region of her heart.

And now the godfathers left the lists, and none remained within them save the two champions facing each other, like two pillars of steel, as solid and as motionless, until the word should be given to set on, and the two barefooted friars, crouching on their knees in the angles of the lists, muttering their orisons before the crucifixes, which they held close before their eyes, as if to shut out every untoward sight which might mar their meditations.

Then a single trumpet was blown. A sharp, stern, warning blast. And a herald made proclamation;

"Oyez! oyez! oyez! This is *champ clos*, for the judgment of God. Therefore, beware all men, to give no aid or comfort to either combatant, by word, deed, sign, or token, on pain of infamy and mutilation."

Then the constable rose in his stirrups, and cried aloud—

"Let them go!"

And the trumpet sounded.

"Let them go!"

And, again, the trumpet sounded.

"Let them go! Do your duty!"

And the earl mareschal answered,

"And may God defend the right!"

And, the third time, the trumpet sounded, short and direful as the blast of doom; and at that deadly summons, with brandished blades, both champions started forward; but the first bound of Sir Aradas carried him across two thirds of the space, and his sword fell like a thunderbolt on the casque of his antagonist, and bent him almost to his knee. But that was no strife to be ended at a blow; and they closed, foot to foot, dealing at each other sweeping blows, which could not be parried, and could scarcely be avoided, but which were warded off by their armor of proof.

It was soon observed that Sir Foulke d'Oilly's blows fell with far the weightier dint, and that, when they took effect, it was all his lighter adversary could do to bear up against them. But, on the other hand, it was seen that, by his wonderful agility, and the lithe motions of his supple and elastic frame, Sir Aradas avoided more blows than he received, and that each stroke missed by his enemy told almost as much against him as a wound.

At the end of half an hour, no material advantage had been gained; the mail of either champion was broken in many places, and the blood flowed, of both, from more wounds than one; that of Aradas the more freely.

But as they paused, perforce, to snatch a moment's breath, it was clear that Sir Aradas was the fresher and less fatigued of the two; while Sir Foulke was evidently short of wind, and hard pressed.

It was not the young man's game to give his enemy time so, before half a minute had passed, he set on him again,

with the same fiery vigor and energy as before. His opponent, however, saw that the long play was telling against him, and it appeared that he was determined to bring the conflict to a close by sheer force.

One great stride he made forward, measuring his distance accurately with his eye, and making hand and foot keep time exactly, as he swung his massive blade in a full circle round his head, and delivered the sweeping blow, at its mightiest impetus, on the right side of his enemy's casque.

Like a thunderbolt it fell; and, beneath its sway, the baçinet, cerveilliere, and avantaille of Aradas gave way, shattered like an egg-shell. He stood utterly unhelmed, save that the beaver and the base of the casque, protecting the nape of his neck and his lower jaw, held firm, and supported the mailed hood of linked steel rings, which defended his neck to the shoulder. All else was bare, and exposed to the first blow of his now triumphant antagonist.

The fight seemed ended by that single blow; and, despite the injunction of the herald, a general groan burst from the assembly. Guendolen covered her face with her hands for a second, but then looked up again, with a wild and frenzied eye, compelled to gaze, to the last, on that terribly fascinating scene.

But then was it shown what might there is in activity, what resistless power in quickness. For, leaping and bounding round the heavy giant, like a sword-player, letting him waste his every blow on the empty air or in the impassive sawdust, Aradas plied his sword like a thrasher's flail, dealing every blow at his neck and the lacings of his casque, till fastening after fastening broke, and it was clear that D'Oilly, too, would be unhelmed in a few more moments.

The excitement of the people was ungovernable; they danced in their seats, they shouted, they roared. No heralds, no pursuivants, no men-at-arms, could control them. The soul of the people had awakened, and what could fetter it?

Still, wonderful as they were, the exertions of Aradas, completely armed in heavy panoply, were too mighty to last. The thing must be finished. Down came the trenchant blade with a circling sweep, full on the jointed-plates of D'Oilly's new-fangled gorget. Rivet after rivet, plate after plate, gave way with a rending crash; his helmet rolled on the ground. He stood bare-headed, bare-throated, unarmed to the shoulders.

But the same blow which unhelmed D'Oilly disarmed Aradas. His faithless sword was shivered to the hilt; and what should he do now, with only that weak, short estoc, that cumbrous dagger, against the downright force of the resistless double-handed glaive?

Backward he sprang ten paces. The glittering estoc was in his right, the short massive dagger in his left. He dropped on his right knee, crouching low, both arms hanging loosely by his sides, but with his eye glaring on his foeman, like that of the hunted tiger.

No sooner had Sir Foulke rallied from the stunning effects of the blow, and seen how it was with him, his enemy disarmed, and, as it seemed, at his power, than a hideous sardonic smile glared over his lurid features, and he strode forward with his sword aloft, to triumph and to kill. When he was within six paces of his kneeling adversary, he paused, measured his distance—it was the precise length for one stride, one downright blow, on that bare head, which no earthly power could now shield against it.

There was no cry now among the people—only a hush. Every heart stood still in that vast concourse.

"Wilt die, or cry 'craven?'"

The eye of Aradas flashed lightning. Lower, he crouched lower, to the ground. His left hand rose slowly, till the guard of his dagger was between his own left, and his enemy's right eye. His right hand was drawn so far back, that the glittering point of the estoc only showed in front of his hip. Lower, yet lower, he crouched, almost in the attitude of the panther couchant for his spring.

One stride made Sir Foulke d'Oilly forward; and down, like some tremendous engine, came the sword-sweep—the gazers heard it whistle through the air as it descended.

What followed, no eye could trace, no pen could describe. There was a wild cry, like that of a savage animal; a fiery leap through a cloud of whirling dust; a straight flash through the haze, like lightning.

One could see that somehow or other that slashing cut was glanced aside, but how, the speed of thought could not trace.

It was done in a second, in the twinkling of an eye. And, as the dust subsided, there stood Aradas, unmoved and calm as the angel of death, with his arms folded, and nothing in his hand save the dagger shivered to the guard. And at his feet lay his enemy, as if stricken by a thunderbolt, with his eyes wide open and his face to heaven, and the deadly estoc buried, to the gripe, in the throat, that should lie no more forever.

Pass we the victor's triumph, and the dead traitor's doom; pass we the lovers' meeting, and the empty roar of popular applause. That was, indeed, the judgment of God; and when God hath spoken, in the glory of his speechless workings, it is good that man should hold his peace before him.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE BRIDAL DAY.

"The roads should blossom, the roads should bloom,
So fair a bride shall leave her home!
Should blossom and bloom with garlands gay,
So fair a bride shall pass to-day."

LONGFELLOW.

THE dark winter months, with their alternate snows, sheeting the wide moorlands, and roofing the mighty mountain-tops of the lake country with inviolate white, and soft thaws swelling the streamlets into torrents, inundating the grassy meadows, and converting the mountain tarns into inland seas, had passed away; nor passed away all gloomily, or without their appropriate and peculiar pleasures, from the sojourners in Hawkshead Castle.

All over Merrie England, but in no part of it more than in the north country, was Christmas the gladdest and the blythest time of all the circling year; when every door stood open, from that of the baron's castle and the franklin's hall to that of the poorest cotter's cabin; when the yule log was kindled, and the yule candle lighted; when the furmety smoked on every English board, and the wassail bowl was spiced for all comers; when the waits sang Christmas carols under the clear cold moon in the frosty midnights, and the morris-dancers and the mummers rioted and reveled to the rude minstrelsy of the time, and made the most of the shortlived wintery sunshine; when ancient feuds were often reconciled,

and ancient friendships riveted by closer ties; when families long dissevered were re-collected and re-united about the old ancestral hearth-stones; when the noble and the rich filled their abundant halls with sumptuous luxury and loud-rejoicing merriment, and the poor were not forgotten by the great.

Indeed, though there was much that was coarse and rude, much that was hard, cruel, and oppressive, in the social life of England, in those old and almost forgotten days, there was much also that was good and generous and genial, much that was sound and hearty, much that was brave and hale and masculine, which has vanished and departed from the world forever, with the vaunted progress of civilization and refinement,

> In those old times
> When the Christmas chimes
> Were a merry sound to hear,
> When the squire's wide hall,
> And the cottage small,
> Were full of good English cheer.

Above all, there was this great redeeming virtue, conspicuous among the flagrant wrongs and innate evils of society under the feudal system, that between the governors and the governed, between the lord and his lieges, nay, even between the master and his serfs, there was then no such social gulf established, as now yawns, in these boasted days of civilizing progress and political equality, between castes and classes, separated by little else than their worth, estimated by the standard of gold—gold, which seems, daily and hourly, more and more to be over-riding all distinctions of honored ancestry, high name, noble deeds, personal deserts, nay, even of distinguished bearing, of intellect, of education, of accomplishment, much more of truth, integrity or honor.

During these wintery months, accordingly, there had been all the free, open-hearted hospitality of the day, displayed throughout the wide manors of Hawkshead, Coniston, and Yewdale, and in the neighboring demesnes of Rydal, and something more even than the wonted merriment and joviality of that sacred yet joyous season.

Many of the grand baronial families of the vicinity, attracted as much, perhaps, by the singular and romantic interest attaching to the great events, which had filled all the north country with the rumor of their fame as with the blast of a martial trumpet, as by the ties of caste and kindred, had visited the castle palace of Sir Yvo de Taillebois, almost in the guise of bridal guests; for the approaching nuptials of the fair Guendolen with Aradas the Brave were openly announced, although the ceremonial was deferred until the balmy days of spring-time, and the genial month of May. The Cliffords of Barden, the Howards, from Naworth and Carlisle, the Percy, from his already famous strength of Alnwick, the Scropes, the Umfravilles, the Nevilles, from their almost royal principality of Middleham on the Ure, had all in turn tasted the Christmas cheer, and shared the older sports of Yule, in the wild recesses of Kendale; had congratulated the young and noble victor on his double conquest, scarce knowing which was most to be envied, that of the felon knight in the black lists of Lancaster, or that of the soft ladye in the sweetest valley of the lone lake country.

But now, the wintery days had passed away, the snipe was heard drumming every where on vibrated pinions, as he soared and dived in mid-air over the deep morasses, in which he annually bred unmolested; the swallows had returned from their

unknown pilgrimage to the spicy isles of ocean, or the central waters of untrodden Africa, and might be seen skimming with rapid wing, the blue mirror of Winandermere, and dimpling its surface in pursuit of their insect prey; the cuckoo had been heard in the birch-woods among the ghylls, and in the huge sycamores around the village garths; the heath-cocks blew their clarion call of amorous defiance from every heath-clad knoll of the wide moorlands; the cushat had donned the iris hues which paint his swelling neck in the spring days of love and courtship; the meadows were alive with crocuses, brown-streaked and purple, white and golden; the snow-drops had raised their silvery bells, almost before the earth was clear of its winter covering; the primroses gemmed all the banks with their pale saffron blossoms, the air was redolent with the delicious perfume of the violets.

It was the eve of May, and as the sun was setting over the misty hills that keep guard over high Yewdale, amid a long and joyous train, dragged slowly by ten yoke of milk-white oxen, with nosegays on their horns, and branches of the fragrant May canopying their harness, escorted by troops of village girls, and stout hill shepherds, dancing along and caroling to the cadence of the pipe, the tabor, and the rebeck, the mighty Maypole was brought in triumph up the weary winding road to the green esplanade before the castle gates of Hawkshead; and there, before midnight, was swung into its place, crowned with garlands, and fluttering with gay streamers, and glad with the leafy garniture of Spring, "shrouds and stays holding it fast," holding it erect toward heaven, an emblem of that which never can, whatever fanatics and bigots may declare, be unacceptable on High, the inno-

cent and pure rejoicings of humble loving hearts, forgetting toil and care, and casting away sorrow for one happy day, at least, the merriest and the maddest of the three hundred and sixty-five, which sum the checkered score of man's annual vicissitudes of labor and repose, brief merriment and lasting sorrow.

During the night deep silence and deep slumber fell like a shadow over keep and cottage, and not a sound disturbed the stillness of the vernal night, unless it were the quavering cry of some night-bird among the tufted woods, or the shrill bark of the hill fox from the mountain side, or the deep harmonious call "All's well," from the warder on the lofty battlements.

But long before the paly dawn had begun to throw its faint yellow glimmer up the eastern sky, while the moon was yet riding lustrous in the cloudless azure, with the morning-star flashing like a diamond by her side, many a cottage door in the silent hamlet, many a one on the gentle slopes of the green hill sides, many a one in the broad pastoral valley, was unbolted, and revolved on noiseless hinges, to send forth the peasant maids, in shy yet merry bands to gather, with many a mystic rite and ceremonial borrowed, unknown to them, from the mythology of other lands, when Flora ruled the month of flowers, to gather the puissant dews of May.

When the sun rose fair above the eastern hills,

"With blessings on his broad and burnished face,"

his appearance was welcomed by such a burst of joyous and hilarious music from the battlements, as never before had waked the echoes of Scafell and Skiddaw. In that triumphant gush of music there were blended, not only the resounding clangor of the Norman kettle-drums and trumpets, with the

clear notes of the mellow bugle, but the tones of a thousand instruments, scarce known on English soil, having been introduced only by the Crusaders from those Oriental climates, in which music is indigenous and native, and from which the retainers of Sir Yvo de Taillebois had imported, not the instruments only but the skill necessary to give them utterance and expression, and the very airs to which, in the cedar-vales, and among the haunted hills of Palestine, they had of old been vocal.

The musical chime of many bells attuned, the silver clash of the cymbals, the roll of the Syrian atabals, the soft tones of the lute, and shrill strains of the Eastern reed-pipes, were blended strangely, but most sonorously with the stirring war-notes of the west. And instantly, as if awakened from sleep by that rejoicing strain, the little chapel bells of Bowness began to tinkle with small merry chimes, across the bright blue lake; and answering, yet further in the distance, though still clearly audible, so apt to the conveyance of sounds is the tranquillity and the clear vibrating air of those mountain regions, the full carillon of the magnificent Abbey of Kendal the stately ruins of which are still extant, as if to teach us boastful men of modern days, the superiority of our semi-barbarous ancestors, as we have the vanity to term them, rang out, proclaiming to the sparse population of the dales,

"How fair a bride shall wed to-day."

Around the Maypole on the green, already were assembled, not the vassals only of the great baron, his free-tenants and his serfs, rejoicing in one happy holiday, and in the prospect of gorging themselves ere nightfall throat-full of solid dainties and sound ale, but half the population of the adjacent valleys,

hill-farmers, statesmen, as the small land-holders are still called in those unsophisticated districts, burghers from the neighboring towns, wandering monks and wandering musicians, a merry, motley multitude, all in their best attire, all wearing bright looks and light hearts, and expecting, as it would seem from the eager looks directed constantly toward the castle gates, the forthcoming of some spectacle or pageant, on which their interest was fixed.

Two or three Welsh harpers, who had been lured from their Cambrian wilds by the far-spread report of the approaching festivities, and by the hope of gaining silver guerdon from the bounty of the splendid Normans, were seated on a grassy knoll, not far from the tall garlanded mast, which made itself conspicuous as the emblem—as, perhaps, in former ages, it had been the idol—of the day, and from time to time drew from the horse-hair strings of their rude harps some of those sweet, wild, melancholy airs which are still characteristic of the genius of the Kymric race, which still recall the hours

"When Arthur ruled and Taliessin sung;"

but neither to them, nor to the indigenous strains, more agreeable perhaps to their untutored ears, of two native crowders of the dales, who were dragging out strange discords from the wires of their rude violins—nor yet to the more captivating and popular arts of three or four foreign jongleurs, with apes and gitterns—the Savoyards of that remote age, though coming at that day not from the valleys of the lower Alps, but from the western shores of Normandy and Morbihan—did the eager crowd vouchsafe much of their attention, or many of their pennies.

There was a higher interest awake, a more earnest expect-

ation, and these were brought to their climax, when, just as the castle bell tolled eight, the wild and startling blast of a single trumpet rose clear and keen from the inner court, and the great gates flew open.

A gay and gallant sight it was, which, as the heavy drawbridge descended, the huge portcullis slowly rose, creaking and clanking, up its grooves of stone, and the iron-studded portals yawned, revealed itself to the eyes of the by-standers; and loud and hearty was the cheer which it evoked from the assembled multitude.

The whole inner court was thronged with men and horses, gayly clad, lightly armed, and splendidly caparisoned; and, as obedient to the signals of the officers who marshaled them, the vaunt-couriers of the company rode out, four by four, arrayed in Kendal green, with the silver badges and blue sarsenet scarfs of their lord, and white satin favors with long silver streamers, waving from their bonnets, the gleam of embroideries and the fluttering of female garments might be discovered within the long-withdrawing avenue. Four hundred strong, the retainers of the high-sheriff, swept forward, with bow and spear, and were succeeded by a herald in his quartered tabard, and a dozen pursuivants with trumpets.

Behind these came, in proud procession, six tall priests, nobly mounted on ambling palfreys, each bearing a gilded cross, and then the crozier of the abbot of Furness Abbaye, followed by that proud prelate, with his distinctive, hierarchal head-tire, cope, and dalmatique, and all the splendid paraphernalia of his sacred feudal dignity, supported by all his clergy in their full canonicals, and a long train of monks and choristers, these waving perfumed chalices, those raising loud and clear the hymns appointed for the ceremonial.

A hundred gentlemen of birth and station, on foot, bareheaded, clad in the liveries of the house of Taillebois, blue velvet slashed and lined with cloth of silver laid down on white satin, came next, the escort of the bridal party, and were followed by a multitude of beautiful girls, dressed in virgin white, strewing flowers before the feet of the bride's palfrey.

But when she appeared, mounted on a snow-white Andalusian jennet, whose tail and mane literally swept the ground in waves of silver, in her robes of white sendal and cloth of silver, with the bridal head-tire of long-descending gauzy fillets floating around her like a wreath of mist about a graceful cypress, and her long auburn ringlets disheveled in their mazes of bright curls, powdered with diamond dust and garlanded with virgin roses, the very battlements shook to the shouts of applause, which made the banners toss and rustle as if a storm-wind smote them.

Two pages, dressed in cloth of silver, tended her bridle-reins on either hand, and two more bore up the long emblazoned foot-cloths of white and silver, which would otherwise have embarrassed the paces of the beautiful and docile steed which bore her, timing its tread to the soft symphony of lutes and dulcimers which harbingered the progress; while no less than six belted knights, with their chains of gold about their necks, bore the staves of the satin canopy, or baldacchino, which sheltered her fair beauties from the beams of the blythe May morning.

Twelve bridesmaids, all of noble birth, mounted like herself on snow-white palfreys, all robed and filleted in white and silver, and garlanded with pale blush roses, nymphs worthy of the present goddess, bridled and blushed behind her. And there, radiant with love and triumph, making his glorious

charger—a red roan, with a mane and tail white and redundant as the surges of the creamy sea—caracole, and bound from the dull earth in sobresaults, croupades and balotades, which would have crazed a professor of equitation with admiration, apart from envy, rode Aradas de Ratcliffe, with his twelve groom's-men glittering with gems, and glorious with silk upon silk, silver upon silver.

Sir Yvo de Taillebois, with twenty or thirty of the greatest barons of the north country, his cotemporaries, and many of them his brothers-in-arms, and fellows at the council-table of their puissant Norman monarch, whom they admitted only to be first baron of the English barons, *primus inter pares*, brought up the rear of the procession, while yet behind them filed a long band of spears and pennoncelles, and again after these a countless multitude, from all the country side, rejoicing and exulting, to form a portion of the pageant which added so much to the customary pleasures of the Maying.

Thus, for miles, they swept onward through the pleasant meadow-land, tufted and gemmed with unnumbered flowers, between tall hedges white with the many-blossomed May, and overrun with flaunting clusters of the delicious wood-bine.

Once and again they were met by troops of country girls scattering flowers, and as often rode beneath triumphal arches, deftly framed of green leaves and gay wild-flowers by rustic hands, in token of the heart's gratitude, until they reached the shores of the blue lake, where Sir Yvo's yacht awaited them, convoyed by every barque and boat that could be pressed into the service from all the neighboring meres and lakelets of the county.

The wind blew fair and soft, and swelled the sails of cloth of silver, and waved the long azure pennants forward, as

omens of happy days ahead; and smoothly over the rippling waters, to the sound of the soft bridal music, galleys and horse-boats, barques and barges, careered in fair procession, while the great multitude, afoot, rushed, like an entering tide, through the horse-roads and lanes around the head of the lake, eager to share the wedding-feast and the wedding dance, at least, if not to witness the nuptial ceremonial.

At Bowness they took horse again, and escorted by the bailiff and burghers of Kendall, proceeded, at an increased pace, to the splendid Abbey Church, dim with the religious light which streamed through its deeply tinted window-panes, and was yet further obscured by the thick clouds from the tossed chalices of incense, through which swelled, like an angel's choir, the pure chant of girls and children, and the deep diapason of the mighty organ.

The nuptial ceremony was followed by a feast fit for kings, served up in the grand hall of Kendal Castle, wherein, before the Norman conquest, the proud Saxon Earls, Morcar and Edwin, maternal ancestors of the fair bride, had banqueted and rioted in state, and where, as tradition related, they had held revel for the last time on the eve of their departure for the fatal field of Hastings, fatal to Saxon liberty, but harbinger of a prouder era, and first cause and creatrix of a nobler race, to rule in Merrie England.

It needs not, here, to dwell on the strange dainties, the now long-disused and unaccustomed viands and beverages of those old days, more than on the romantic feudal usages and abstruse ceremonials of the day; suffice it that, to their palates, heronshaw, egret and peacock, venison and boar's-meat, and chines of the wild bull, were no less dainty than the choicest

of our modern luxuries to the beaux and belles of the nineteenth century; and that hypocras and pigment, morat and mead and clary, made the pulses burn and the cheeks mantle as blythely and as brightly as Champagne or Burgundy. The ball, for the nobles in the castle-hall, for the commons on the castle-green, followed the feast; but not till the stocking had been thrown, and the curtain drawn, and the beautiful bride fairly bedded, was the nuptial ceremony esteemed fully ended, which gave the lovely Guendolen, for weal and not for woe, to the brave and faithful Aradas de Ratcliffe.

The raptures of lovers are not to be described; and if the pen of the ready-writer may gain inspiration to delineate the workings of strong mental passions, of intense moral or physical excitements, to depict stormy wrath, the agonies of hope deferred, the slow-consuming pangs of hopeless regret, there is one thing that must ever defy his powers of representation—the calm enjoyment of every-day domestic happiness; the easy and unvarying pleasures of contentment; the placid routine of hourly duties, hourly delights, hourly labors, hourly affections; and that soft intermixture of small cares and passing sorrows, with great blessings tasted, and great gratitudes due, which make up the sum of the most innocent and blessed human life.

And such was the life of Sir Aradas and the fair Guendolen de Ratcliffe, until, to borrow the quaint phrase of the narrator of those incomparable tales of the Thousand and One Nights, "they were visited by the terminator of delights, and the separator of companions. Extolled be the perfection of the Living, who dieth not!"

Sir Yvo de Taillebois lived long enough to see his child's

children gathered to his knee; to prognosticate, in their promise, fresh honors to his high-born race; but not so long as to outlive his intellect, his powers to advise, console, enjoy, and, above all, to trust in God. Full of years and full of honors, he was gathered to his fathers in the ripeness of his time, and he sleeps in a quiet churchyard in his native valley, where a green oak-tree shades his ashes, and the ever-vocal music of the rippling Kent sings his sweet, natural requiem.

Eadwulf the Red never recovered from the starvation and exposure endured in his escape and subsequent wanderings; and, though he received the priceless boon of liberty, and the king's free pardon for his crimes, though he passed his declining days in the beautiful cottage nigh Kentmere, with his noble brother, his fair wife, and all the treasured little ones about him, who grew up like olive-branches round Kenric's happy, honored board, with every thing to soothe his stubborn heart and soften his morose and bitter spirit, he lived and died a gloomy, disappointed, bitter, and bad-hearted man, a victim in some sort of the vicious and cruel system which had debased his soul more even than it had degraded his body.

Yet it was not in that accursed system, altogether; for the gallant and good Kenric, and his sweet wife, Edith the Fair, were living proofs, even, as the noble poet sings—

> "That gentleness and love and trust
> Prevail o'er angry wave and gust;"

and it was no less "the spur, that the clear spirit doth raise," than the grand force of that holiest Saxon institution, Trial by Jury, that raised Kenric from a Saxon serf to be an English freeman.